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THE  
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

AUGUST 1916.

THE TUTOR'S STORY.<sup>1</sup>

BY THE LATE CHARLES KINGSLEY.

REVISED AND COMPLETED BY HIS DAUGHTER, LUCAS MALET.

CHAPTER XXVII.

I DREW aside the curtain, unlatched the casement, and leaned out. Upon the elms in the Fellows' Garden, the lawns, and laurel shrubberies, moonlight lay soft and white. But looking upward I saw, above the angle of the parapet, a great column of smoke, dashed with fiery flakes, surging into the wind-swept sky. I hurried into my dressing-room, which overlooked the inner court, and there a strange scene met my eyes. A red glare, jets of smoke and angry flame deformed the opposite façade; while, over the grass plats and paved ways of the little quad and about the fountain in the centre, dark shapes rushed to and fro, raised hands and upturned faces showing unnaturally pale and distorted in the dreadful light.—A living page torn from Dante's *Inferno*, it seemed.

The fire was here, then, close at hand, within the precincts of the College itself.

Shocked and alarmed, I searched for my keys—I was always a careful and methodical person—that I might lock away Hartover's letter in my desk. But my study lamp had burned low, and, between agitation and the semi-darkness, I failed to put my hand on them; so thrust the letter between the pages of a big lexicon lying on the writing-table, and ran out, dragging on my gown.

When I got on to the landing I found I had not brought my sporting key. I would have gone back for it; but the noise increased below, while men, racing down from the upper stories, shouted, in passing, that the Master's Lodge was alight and lives endangered. I remembered that Mrs. Dynevor, the Master's sister, and her daughters—the young lady who had made herself

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so innocently pleasant to me at dinner—were still his guests, and this added to my alarm. After all, who would think of entering my rooms at such a moment as this? I ran on, leaving my outer door unfastened.

The whole population of the College seemed to be congregated in the small quadrangle, from vice-master and senior fellows—'grave and reverend signors,' equally able and ready to appreciate good wine, a good dinner, an apt Greek quotation or pawky Latin joke—to gyps, scullions and cooks. Under the direction of the city fire brigade, a chain of willing workers had been formed passing buckets from hand to hand from the fountain to the side door of the Lodge. But it was only too evident the fire had firm hold, and the means of arresting it were sadly inadequate.

Anxious to know if the ladies were in safety, I made my way towards the Master, who, calm and dignified, tried to pacify a little group of terrified women—among whom I gladly recognised Mrs. Dynevor and her younger daughter—torn from their sleep only half-clothed, and wrapped in shawls and coverlets. But just as I reached him a cry of horror went up from the crowd.

The Lodge, sandwiched in between the Chapel on one side and Hall on the other, is the oldest portion of the College buildings, dating from pre-Reformation times. Looking up, now, at the low narrow windows of the third floor, I saw, as others had just seen, in the light of a sudden outburst of flame, a girl's face, her arms outstretched in agonised appeal between the heavy bars.

'Alice,' the Master cried aloud, for the moment losing his fine composure. 'Alice, left behind in the blue bedroom! I thought she was here. And—merciful powers—the fire between us and her!'

Careless of the restraints of age and of his official position, he broke away, almost roughly, from poor Mrs. Dynevor, who clung to him weeping, and rushed towards the side door. A sudden energy seizing me—I was half maddened already by pity and excitement—I kept pace with him.

'Show me where? Tell me how to reach the blue room, sir,' I cried; and calling to the nearest fireman, we three went on into the burning house—while awed silence fell upon the crowd without.

What a labyrinth of a place it was, all wainscotted and panelled too, the woodwork like so much tinder from age and dry rot! We ran through passages choked with acrid fumes, up stairs dripping

with foul water, past the doors of pleasant studious rooms where we heard the fire hissing and crackling within; finally half-way down a long corridor—and there we stopped short. Ahead of us stretched an apparently impenetrable barrier of smoke; and beyond it, felt rather than seen, a redness of bellowing flame.

Three times we pushed forward into the smoke, and thrice staggered back half senseless. The third time I got far enough to find the floor burning and crumbling beneath my feet. All ingress was cut off.

'Ah! the poor child, the poor doomed child,' the Master wailed, stirred to the depths of his kindly and genial nature. 'She must die—and, oh! my God, what a death.'

'Can they raise no ladder to the window from the court?' I asked, distracted by the sight of my old friend's grief.

'What use? You forget the bars.'

'Can we break through no party-wall?—from a side room?'

'Yes—a side room. The door is there—within the smoke—on the left, if you can reach it. God bless you for the thought—and we may save her yet.'

'Have you an axe?' I cried to the fireman.

'Trust me for that, sir,' he answered.

And we again passed into the curtain of smoke, hand in hand, I foremost. Choking, blinded, stifled, in a hideous light which yet was almost total darkness, I groped along the wall for the door. It could not have been more than five yards off, but those yards seemed to lengthen into miles. The Master gave in, not from lack of courage or determination, but simply from physical exhaustion—and, with a groan, fell fainting.

'Carry him back,' I panted, and feeling for the fireman's hand snatched the axe from it.

'Come back, too, sir,' he whispered hoarsely, 'or you're a dead man.'

But nothing was further from my thoughts, or from my wishes, than turning back. A strange exhilaration possessed me. The heavy weight of trouble about the dear boy, of trouble about Nellie, was lifted off me. I felt strong and free in the choking red darkness of the burning house, almost as I felt strong and free when I saved the pack, under the open sky, on the crest of the fells high above royal Hover. The student, the man of thought and of books, had given place to the man of action, of adventure and practical achievement. I knew full well that I took my life in my hand.

What did that matter? If I lived, I lived; if I died, I died; and—equally in either case—might God have mercy on my soul! But, honestly I can declare, I never felt more at peace, more happy, than as—half-asphyxiated by nauseous vapours—I groped my way along the smoke-hidden wall, found the handle, turned it, and, opening the door, passed into a comparatively clear atmosphere.

Slamming the door to behind me, I crossed the room and thrusting some furniture aside, began hewing at the wall, with a singular light-heartedness of fury. Mercifully the wall was only lath and plaster. In less than five minutes I cleared a way into the fateful blue bed-chamber beyond.

Ah! what a cruel sight! On my right flames flickered up the half-burned door. The plaster was dropping from the ceiling. Blue tongues of fire ran along the skeleton uprights. All one side of the room glowed red in hideous decay. The bed-hangings were just flashing into a blaze.

Where was she, the innocent friendly young girl, with whom I had conversed and to whose simple singing I had listened, so far from all hint of tragedy and danger, but a week or two ago?

Crouched below the window, faint whether from that agonised crying for help, or from terror, she had curled her limbs together and laid her down to burn piecemeal. There was nothing to be seen among the white robes but a long tress of brown hair and her poor little bare feet, which quivered convulsively as though in momentary expectation the flame would reach them and the torture begin.

'Alice—Miss Dynevor,' I called, but she did not move.

I tore a blanket from the bed, wrapped her in it, lifted her up and bore her back through the opening in the wall, rudely enough.

And then?—How to escape I knew not. The door I had entered by, almost impossible then, must be wholly so by now. The window was useless; the lights too narrow for a body to pass through, even had they not been barred. We were trapped indeed—the horrible moment only postponed awhile, and for two lives now instead of one. Still that strange exaltation held me. Never had I felt, as just then, the worthlessness of mere earthly life. What did it signify to the world, what did it signify to me, whether I was what men call alive, or what men call dead? I had tried for once to live for some purpose; and—as it seemed—had failed. I had thought, in myself, that I could help God; but God had chosen to go His own way—or let the devil go his—and do without me. Now all I knew was that, although I was

not necessary to God, God was more necessary to me than ever before. Yea, though He slew me, would I trust in Him!

Nevertheless, burn this young girl should not if I could help it. I made up my mind what to do—quickly enough, as was needful, for the room we had just left was all aflame. I had cut through one wall. I would try to cut through another; and, if I could not, I would wrap the blanket so closely round her that she should smother rather than burn—

All this darted through my mind, as thoughts are said to through a drowning man's, in an instant of time. Not three minutes, indeed, had we been together in that second room before I was hewing at the wall.

The first stroke jarred me to the shoulders. This was of brick, then. And how thick?—How could I tell? My heart sank within me, I own. A four-inch wall I might pierce. But a nine-inch, a fourteen-inch—and those forefathers of ours stinted neither material nor labour. They built solidly. Heaven help me—for my arms were aching and stiff already; and, even had they not been, I dared not strike too hard lest I broke the axe-handle, which was light and thin.

A brief space, which seemed infinite, while the flames crackled behind us and the room filled with smoke.

Again a brief space, and a frightful thought crossed my mind. Even if I succeeded, what was beyond? Might not the adjoining room be on fire likewise?

For the strain became too great, too prolonged. Exhausted as I was by violent exertion in that stifling atmosphere, reaction set in. It was, I honestly believe, more physical than moral; but once more I felt that cruel sinking of the heart, along with almost uncontrollable terror of the bodily torment surely awaiting me. Trapped, hopeless, lost—my arms dropped at my sides.

Shame, though, shame that I should turn craven now! So, praying as I had never prayed before, I heaved up weary hands and struck a desperate blow, which—cracked the axe-handle. But for this I could afford to care little, since I had felt the whole structure shake and bulge under that blow. I clutched the handle in both hands, and butted with the axe-head at the wall, using every ounce of force left in me.

A full yard of bricks and rubble fell outward with a mighty crash; and I, lurching forward, saw below me, touched by slanting rays of white moonlight, the wet steps of a winding stone stair. For some seconds I was too weak, from sheer thankfulness, to move.

Then, not without an effort—for I felt childishly fearful of losing sight of those cool wet steps for however brief an interval—I turned and raised Alice Dynevor from the ground, bidding her wake, telling her all was well, that we were saved; and gathering her in my arms, I put her, feet foremost, through the jagged, blessed cleft in the wall.

As I did so, my ears were greeted by a cheer, and a dozen gownsmen swarmed up the slippery stairway, strong young hands outstretched to help, eager young voices pouring forth rejoicing and generous praise. How good it was, how beautiful, how sustaining after the vision of hell, which I had met, battled with, and, God be thanked, overcome and left behind!

They would have borne us away in triumph in their enthusiasm; but Alice Dynevor stood up, shrinking and drawing the blanket closer round her.

'No,' she faltered. 'Take me—you take me—I am frightened—let no one touch me but you.'

So, not a little affected by her trust in me, I gathered her up once more, staggered down, and out into the sweet clear open air, while the young men held me right and left. She had twined her arms tight round my neck, still quivering and trembling in every limb.

In the courtyard the crowd fell apart, cheering, as the Master came to us. He was calm and collected; but his face worked with emotion as he lifted Alice Dynevor off my shoulder. And as he did so, I felt upon my cheek, upon my lips—was it my fancy?—surely not—a kiss, warm and ardent. A living woman's kiss—the first I had ever known since my mother's kisses in childhood, long years ago.

I was somewhat of a stoic—stoic by ill-health and cold blood; stoic by long self-restraint; yet that kiss made me start and shudder, not with pain. I could not forget it. The sensation of its impress remained with me for many hours.

I ascertained that, although the Master's Lodge was practically gutted, a fair proportion of its contents in the way of books and furniture was saved. The fire, successfully checked right and left, had spared both the Chapel and Hall. With that assurance, worn out both in body and mind, bruised, scorched, begrimed, a sorry enough sight, I managed to slip out of the kindly and excited throng unobserved. Assuredly I had earned my sleep to-night!



But another disquieting episode was in store for me before I got it.

For as, wearily and painfully, I climbed my staircase, I heard footsteps coming out from my rooms. I hurried to the best of my power; but, ere I reached the first landing, they travelled on cautiously to the second. I followed thither. Doors stood open on to rooms, empty and dark, for the men were still busy in the court below. But in one I saw a twinkling light. I entered, without apology, to find friend Halidane, hastily divesting himself of coat and waistcoat preparatory to going to bed.

'My dear Brownlow!' he exclaimed, with effusive cordiality, though, as I fancied, some confusion. 'What brings you here? What do you want? Alas! I see you are hurt. Let me come down and dress your wounds.—Nay, nay, do not deny me the christian joy of tending on a christian hero in his suffering and distress.'

'You were in my rooms just now, were you not?' I asked bluntly.

'I—why should I be in your rooms? Or rather, indeed, why should I not? I looked in at your door, it being unfastened, hearing you had left the quad, and longing to assist you after your fatigues. But, finding no light, came upstairs at once. I assure you—Ah! do not deny me—let me help you to prepare for rest.'

'No, thank you,' I said, convinced, from his very anxiety to allay my suspicions, that he lied. Smug though his countenance was, he could not hide an expression which spelled guilt—at least so I thought. As for his not looking me in the face when he spoke, he never did so—hence nothing could be inferred from that.

I turned to go, while he alternately bepraised my conduct and bemoaned my sufferings—one as fulsomely as the other. He followed me to my door, nervously, as I thought; but I sported him out firmly, if civilly, leaving him in no doubt that I did not covet his presence. I lighted a lamp, and then I hastened to examine the big book. I reasoned with my alarm, for it was not possible that he knew Hartover's letter lay hidden in it. But alarm remained. I was constantly and radically distrustful of the man. Tired out though I was, before all things I must make sure the letter was safe.

Yes, it was safe enough. With a sigh of relief I locked it away in my desk. But what was that on the shiny surface of the table?—A large drop of tallow.

All my suspicions revived. I opened the lexicon again. I did not know at what page I had put in the letter, but I found out only too soon. Inside the leaf edges was a smear of tallow, which led me to notice a couple more big drops badly defacing the text. Clumsy rogue! For surely there was a candle on his chimney-piece when I saw him upstairs? Still, it might have been the gyp or bed-maker. No; they would certainly be at the fire, and what could they be doing in any man's room at four o'clock in the morning?

Blaming myself bitterly for my carelessness, I undressed; and lay tossing, sleepless, till dawn, what with exhaustion, excitement, the dread that prying hypocrite had learned my dear boy's secret, and—must I admit it?—the memory of Alice Dynevor's kiss.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

AND here I must make a confession, if I am to put my story honestly upon paper. For the events of that night produced results upon which I cannot look back with satisfaction.

True, the position in which they placed me was none of my own seeking, but forced on me by circumstance. Still, I cannot wholly excuse myself of fault. Like most men, I suppose, I possess a fair share of vanity; though, heaven knows, in my case, what with lameness, poverty, and the obscurity of my early lot, vanity had little enough, so far, to feed upon. Perhaps, on this very account, it was all the more greedy of sustenance. My rescue of Alice Dynevor was the nine days' wonder of the College. I was acclaimed a veritable hero. This affected me but little. Granted the opportunity, a score of men, as I told them, would have done everything I had, and probably done it ten times better. Having risked my life once to save a few hounds, there was no great credit in risking it a second time to save a human being.

But the matter did not end there. It would have been better had it done so—for my conscience' sake, and, I am afraid, for the peace of mind of others. What my kind old friend the Master said to me I shall not repeat. Still less shall I repeat what was said to me by Mrs. Dynevor. Who dare measure the tenderness of a mother's heart or the generosity of its gratitude?

While the Lodge was refitting and rebuilding, the Master removed to a house in Trumpington Street, near the Fitzwilliam Museum, surrounded by large park-like grounds. The three ladies



were still his guests ; indeed, report declared they had taken up their abode with him permanently. Here I was asked to dinner often, twice a week, perhaps ; and told, moreover, to consider myself on the footing of an intimate friend, free to come in and out when I liked. And pleasant enough was that permission. Pleasant to a lonely man, such as I, to meet bright smiling faces, to sit and talk, or listen to music, to be petted—mothered almost—by a comely older woman, welcomed and made much of by younger ones. The whole thing was new to me—new as it was flattering and charming. I slipped into something approaching intimacy before I realised what was happening.

For, as the days went by, I could not but perceive that Alice, the girl whose life I had saved, bestowed on me very kindly glances—glances in which I, though unskilled in such language, read something deeper and—shall I say ?—sweeter than mere gratitude. To her kiss—if kiss indeed it was—given under the stress of great emotion, I did not attach importance. To do so would have been, in my opinion, both unchivalrous and fatuous. But, as between man and maid, there is a light in young eyes which can hardly be mistaken by even the most cold-blooded or most ignorant. And that light I beheld, evening after evening, upon her smiling and ingenuous countenance.

She was not, as I have already said, particularly pretty, or particularly clever, or particularly anything beyond being well educated and well brought up, with the good manners which come of an amiable nature and the habit of moving in the society of her equals. But for the experiences of that fearful night I should, in all probability, have met her, parted from her, and remembrance of her would have faded from my mind altogether. As it was, I could not but observe—nor deny I took a certain pleasure in observing—that she sought and preferred my company ; that when we talked she led the conversation, in as far as she knew how, to tender, earnest, fanciful subjects—such as, in those days, were called ‘ sentiment ’—and tried to gain a response from me. And, within certain limits, my vanity being flattered though my heart was untouched, I did respond. I had no wish to mislead her ; but I was weak and self-indulgent in that, the present being agreeable, I let things drift.

I do not pretend to justify, or indeed quite to understand my own state of mind at that period. I was still under the influence of my trouble and disappointment about Hartover, the bitterness of my own inability to help the dear boy, and save him from the

consequences of his own ill-judged action. I trembled for his future. I had written to him, and oh! what a letter to write. To be at once truthful and moderate required all my judgment and tact. I could not approve, yet I feared to alienate him by expression of my real feeling. My love for Nellie Braithwaite told on me, too—and the temptation to profit by Hartover's marriage and press my own suit. Thus, perplexed and unhappy, I fell, I own, from high standards of endeavour. The things dearest to me I had failed in, or knew were beyond my grasp. A cheaper, commoner way of success and of happiness—happiness, that is, of a sort—lay open to me. Should I fling aside impossible ideals, and take it?

For I could not but observe, further, that Mrs. Dynevor, and the Master himself, looked on at my intercourse with Alice complacently enough; that the former managed adroitly to throw us together, encouraged us to sing and read together, found opportunities for leaving us alone often—and too often. After all, I was no unfit match for her daughter. I was already a fellow and tutor of my College, with the prospect of a good college living hereafter: the prospect, if the Hartover interest did fail me—and fail me, I felt pretty sure for many reasons, it would not—of presentation to the first rich living in Lord Longmoor's gift which might fall vacant if I chose to apply for it. I was as well born as the Master. He had made his way in the world, even as I was in the act of making mine, by personal ability and scholarship. Hence, on the score of station, there could be no valid objection to my suit.

Should I then—for there were actually times when I began to ask myself this—renounce high romance, and the many sacrifices and sorrows which go along with it, and content myself with a comfortable country rectory and the company of an amiable and affectionate wife—a very respectable and respected manner of existence after all, with chances, moreover, of doing much good after a quiet unostentatious fashion?

Who could blame me if I accepted such a future?

No one, surely—unless I blamed myself. There was the crux, the rub. For should I not blame myself, and that increasingly as years went on, unless I renounced my present standards and declined upon altogether lower levels of thought and effort; unless, in fact, I allowed myself to sink into a certain moral and mental sloth—the sloth of one who, hearing, refuses the call to battle, preferring ignobly to 'stay by the stuff'?

Thus outwardly in lively and in pleasant intercourse, inwardly in travail of spirit and indecision, time passed until the end of the Lent term was well in sight.

Then, one evening, when I had been dining at the house in Trumpington Street, as I bade the Master good-night, he told me that he, and Mrs. Dynevor and her daughters, intended to spend the vacation at Bath, and invited me to join the party as his guest.

'You really must come, Brownlow,' he said, 'for my young ladies count upon your escort for the various expeditions they propose to make in the neighbourhood of the city of Bladud. They will be sadly put out if you desert us—and so, my dear fellow, shall I.'

He laid his hand kindly upon my shoulder.

'I have come to depend upon your companionship more than I ever have on that of any man of your age. It is a pleasure and entertainment to me—I had almost said a solace. For we portly old bachelors have our hours of regret, you know, for the family life which, for some reason good or bad, or from no reason at all but our own laziness, we rejected, or missed, in our earlier years. There comes a time to most of us when, if a man is wholesome, his heart in the right place, he grows tired of living for and by himself, and begins to look to the second generation, to sons and daughters, for his interest and hold on life. A risky time!—Some old fools try to retrieve the position by marrying. That form of senile dementia, thank heaven! has not attacked me as yet. But I own I like having young people about me. And specially, Brownlow, I like having you in and out of my house. So, my good fellow, be prepared to pack up your traps by this day week, and start with us for Bath. We shall take a post-chaise as well as my carriage, and make a two days' journey of it.'

His affection touched me deeply, the more so that I could not disguise from myself the meaning and purpose of that which he said. It was an invitation, surely, to declare myself in respect of Alice Dynevor, an assurance that such a declaration had his approval and support. I was both embarrassed and troubled by self-reproach. Immediately, however, my course of action was clear. I told him, with many expressions of genuine sorrow, that it was impossible for me to accompany the party to Bath, since I had already promised to spend the vacation with friends in the country—friends whom I had known when I was at Hover. The promise was of long standing, one which, without flagrant

discourtesy, I could not break. Though evidently disappointed, and even a little vexed, he admitted the justice of what I said.

'Well, well; perhaps, though you cannot go with us, you can join us at Bath for a week before our return.'

And he asked me one or two questions about these Yorkshire friends, which fortunately I could answer without making any mention of Nellie.

I walked back to my College deep in thought. For, clearly, I must not play with the situation any longer. I must arrive at a final decision. I must pull myself together and refuse to drift. Once and for all I must know my own mind. But to do so I must see Nellie Braithwaite first.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

A WARM drizzling mist, shot with silver light where the April sun vainly tried to break through, covered the hedgeless fields, dark plough and green pasture, and the great fen lands, as I drove out the twenty miles from Cambridge to Westrea. I had hired a gig from the livery stable, driven by a superannuated post-boy, a withered scrap of a creature, toothless and—rather to my relief—silent, save for professional clickings and chirrupings addressed to his horse. The gig bobbed and curtsied over the rutted cross-country roads at a bare six miles an hour. We passed but few villages, a few scattered cottages, a few farm-carts—these mostly drawn by oxen, to me an unusual sight. The country was bare, featureless, sparsely inhabited, and sad. Once or twice the mist, lifting, disclosed vast reed-beds and expanses of still blue-brown water, off which, with strange plaintive cries and a mighty whirring and beating of wings, great flocks of wild fowl rose.

As we neared our destination the landscape assumed a more cheerful character, being diversified by low hills, fine timber trees, and patches of wood; more prosperous, too, with neater cottages, a better type both of farm and farming, and clean running brooks in place of stagnant fen.

Directed by the rubicund and jovial host of a wayside inn, we turned off the main road, through a field gate, and drove some quarter of a mile down an avenue of fine oaks to a comely red-brick house set in the hollow—tile-roofed and gabled, with stacks of high twisted chimneys, the whole dating, as I judged, from the latter part of the seventeenth century. In front of it a garden

the box-edged borders bright with spring flowers, brick walls—against which fruit trees were trained—on either hand, stretched down to the stream, here artificially widened into a sort of moat, its banks supported by masonry. Even now, through the drizzling rain, the place seemed to tell of ample, if homely, comfort and prosperity.

Crossing the stream by a hump-backed brick bridge, the gig drew up, amid flutter of pigeons and barking of dogs, before a square porch, where Braithwaite met me with extended hand.

‘Well—so here you are,’ he said. ‘And welcome to Westrea—no man more so; though the skies might have treated you in kindlier fashion, we must own.’

Then, as I clambered down and tipped my ancient driver, he lifted out my carpet bag and called to Nellie. And I, looking once again into her beautiful face, knew, beyond all question of doubt, that the words asking the Master’s niece, Alice Dynevor, to be my bride would never be spoken. No—whether hopeless or not as to the final issue, here my heart was anchored; so that, failing the beloved woman who stood before me, I must go mateless to the end of my days.

Nellie’s greeting was very quiet. Yet I fancied my coming gave her pleasure, for her cheek flushed and the old witch-smile played about her lips. Still, I use the word ‘woman’ advisedly. For, even in the dim light of the porch, I was conscious of a change in her—of something lost, yet something gained and added; of a greater poise, a greater dignity, for hers was—may I not say *is*, and that how thankfully?—one of those natures which experience and trial serve to mature and enrich rather than to break.—Would there were more of such; for are they not the salt of the earth, the divinely given leaven which, unto strength, courage, righteousness, leavens the whole lump? Ah! what a wife for my dear, weak, wayward, noble boy, Hartover!—Or, he being free no longer, what a wife for—

Sternly I put that thought from me. To indulge it would be to sink myself in intoxicating dreams and visions, drench my senses with sweet poison, emasculate my reason and my will—in a word, unman myself. Since her presence affected me even more profoundly than I anticipated, I must, in honour, arm myself against the delight of it with all the fortitude and prudence I possessed.

We had passed straight from the porch into the main living-room of the house, a large hall with a heavily timbered ceiling

and a big open fireplace at the further end. Some logs burned cheerfully upon the hearth—a not unwelcome sight after my long drive in the drizzling mist. Here sweet-faced Miss Ann Braithwaite, in quakerish grey gown and close net cap, received me with kindly speech. Everything spoke of the same easy circumstances and solid comfort, along with an exquisite cleanliness very pleasant to the eye and touch.

At supper Nellie performed her duties as hostess with a pretty solicitude and dignity; and the evening passed in talk, Braithwaite glad enough, I think, to hold forth once more on social reform, national and political subjects. He certainly talked well and to the point—his views humorously and, I must add, enlighteningly different to those I was accustomed to hear set forth in College Common-rooms or at the High Table in Hall. But I fancied his radicalism sounded a less temperate and genial note, and that he looked anxiously at Nellie from time to time. His manner to her was peculiarly gentle, and he referred to her opinion with an almost wistful desire to interest her in our conversation.

I had no opportunity of speaking with her alone that night, for which I was not altogether sorry. Better to wait until the first sweet torment of her nearness had worn off, and I had schooled myself to accept it without nervousness.

I rose to a day as brilliantly fair as yesterday had been wet. Sunshine and fresh air pervaded the house. A side door, in the hall—where breakfast awaited me—stood open on to the garden, the moat, and avenue of oaks climbing the gentle grass slope beyond to the sky-line.

After breakfast Braithwaite went out on to his farm, and Miss Ann retired to attend to some household business. Nellie, an all-round blue apron tied over her light gown and a white sunbonnet upon her head, stood at the table gathering scraps of broken food into a bowl. She was going, so she told me, to feed some broods of young chickens in the Orchard Close; and, on my asking permission to go with her, seemed pleased to have my company. As we passed out of the porch into the morning sunshine, I could not but exclaim at the peaceful charm of the place.

‘Yes,’ she said. ‘It is peaceful—almost too peaceful, perhaps. But my father does not feel that. He has plenty to occupy him. The land had been neglected and the farm buildings suffered to fall into decay before we came; and you know his energy in making improvements and setting things to rights—working himself and



making, not only his labourers, but nature itself work for and with him.'

She glanced at me with a smile of tender amusement.

'He is happy here,' she added.

'And you?' I asked, perhaps unwisely.

'If he is happy, I am content,' she answered. 'He is the best father living, and—his will is mine, dear Mr. Brownlow. It ought to be so, for he is most indulgent to me. There is nothing I could ask for which he would not give me if he could.'

And she paused.

'If he could?' I repeated, for it struck me she alluded to a subject which must be in both our minds, and about which she might be glad to speak.

'Yes,' she said; 'there are things—or at least there is one thing he cannot give me, because it is—or rather was—against his principles and judgment, against his conviction of what is wise and right. And now——'

Again she paused.

'Now it is too late.'

She moved forward quickly and opened the door leading into the Orchard Close—some half acre of ancient turf, in which grew fine old fruit trees, apple, pear, plum, cherry, and shining-leaved walnut. The pears were already in blossom, their pyramids and wreaths of powdery white seen, overhead, against the radiant blue. High brick walls, mellow with age and encrusted in places with lichens of every tint from vivid orange to delicate grey, enclosed the place. Hen-coops were set out upon the warm short grass, over which a busy population of yellow chicks and ducklings scampered towards us—their mothers and foster-mothers, meanwhile, craning ruffled necks between the wooden bars of the coops, with distracted callings and cluckings.

With a wooden spoon Nellie scattered the food among them from her bowl, looking down at the pretty, clean, scrambling little creatures—both she, they, the blossoming trees, and ruddy walls making a charming picture. But a change had come over her. The smile, the play of feature, vanished. The cheek seemed to sharpen, the dark line under the eyes to darken yet more. A settled sadness seemed to touch her. Was it thus she looked when she had not to amuse her father, when she had not to put a force upon herself, and feign cheerfulness for the sake of those about her—when she found herself alone, in short?

Vain heart of mine!—for was this not a confession that she

dare be herself before me, that I was privileged to witness what she hid from others? There was a compression about the lips now, a kindling of the eyes, which told me she was coming straight to the point, like the fine and fearless woman she was—but I little expected to what point.

She set down the bowl upon the grass, where the greedy chicks swarmed over and into it, and thrusting her hand within the bosom of her dress drew out a letter.

'This reached me a week ago,' she said. 'I could not show it to my father, nor to dear Aunt Ann. Had you not been coming, I must have written to you, Mr. Brownlow. Suspense was intolerable; and, if you yourself knew, I was sure you would tell me the truth.'

She put the letter into my hand. I recognised the writing at once, and with a feeling of shame and sorrow, amounting almost to horror, looked her in the face. God! how glorious it was in its agony—courage which could meet anything which must be; act on anything which was right; and, with all, such invincible sweetness!

I read the letter.

'Silly Country Girl—Listen to me, and cease to follow what you will never win and try to reach honours which belong to bolder hearts than yours. You are thrown aside and done with, like his old glove, his old shoe. Know, then—but do not tell it, for the day you do tell shall be the last safe one of your life—that he is married already; and to me, who am far cleverer than you, and can please him better, love him better than you, ignorant little peasant, could ever please or love.'

'Devil!' was all I said, as I finished this melodramatic effusion, for anger and disgust choked me.

'It is so, then?'—from Nellie, watching me.

'You asked me to be truthful?—It is. I know the handwriting too well.'

'Whose is it?' she asked, in a low but steady voice.

'That of the person—the Frenchwoman—whom he has married.'

'Mademoiselle Fédore, who used to be at Hover?'

'Mademoiselle Fédore.'

She raised her head, standing stiffly erect, her whole form tense and rigid for a moment. I could not speak. What comfort could I offer? Her grief was too sacred for me to profane it with any chance words of sympathy. I could only admire, reverence, —aye, and worship—before this martyrdom of true love.



At last: 'I believed it. Yes—I was sure from the first. But it is very cruel. I have not deserved that insult. Whom have I followed? What honours have I tried to reach? I have striven, dear Mr. Brownlow, not even to think of him. Ever since my father forbade me to see him, or hold any sort of intercourse with him, there was but one thing to do—to obey. And I have obeyed. God knows that I have. You believe me?'

She glanced up in my face with something of the old witch-smile. My eyes answered yes. I dared not trust myself to speak. She looked down again on to the smooth turf and soft, scrambling, peeping chickens.

'Tell me—I only saw her once, and saw she was very handsome. But is she—is she worthy of him?'

'Do not ask me,' I said, weakly perhaps; but I was hard pressed, wellnigh desperate. 'Judge for yourself of the nature of the woman who could write such a letter.'

'No, if I begin to judge, if I begin to fancy, I should go—it is wrong, it is wicked of me—but I feel, at times, I should go mad.'

She was silent again, looking down. Then:

'God forgive her—for this letter has undone the work of months. Ever since we left Yorkshire, and came here to Westrea, I have struggled for my father's sake, for Aunt Ann's—and for my own pride's sake too—to put the thought of him out of my mind, and interest myself in books, in my father's schemes, and in my own home duties. I believed I had conquered myself, conquered my—my love. But this letter brought back all the pain, and stirred up something violent and evil in me—something I have never felt before. It is degrading. I am jealous, dear Mr. Brownlow—jealous. Do you know what that means?'

Alas! did I not know?—and most bitterly!

'But of course you do not. How should you?' she went on.

How should I indeed?—And she smiled at me in lovely apology, thereby cutting me to the quick. For did not her words, her look, show how wholly innocent and ignorant she was of all personal feeling on my part?

Well, and if so, what had I to complain of? Earlier, had it not been an integral element in that mystic, fantastic inner life of mine, to conceive of her loving the dear boy as deeply, eternally; even though as hopelessly, as I loved her? Now that my conception proved true in fact, what cause had I to be hurt, and to shrink? Was it not inconsistent, illogical, a very height of unreason? I took myself to task for my folly; but I suffered. Meanwhile

an idea occurred to me, but I dared not put it into execution yet. In *Fédore's* letter was one lie which could and, in justice to the dear boy, ought to be refuted. But I must wait until I could judge better of *Nellie's* powers of endurance, and better trust my own calmness and nerve in handling a very delicate subject.

Now I only said to her :

'Will you trust me with this letter, and let me keep it for the present ?'

'Why ?'

'Because—forgive me if I seem to preach to you—as long as it remains in your possession, you cannot, I think, but read and re-read it.'

'That is true,' she said.

'And each time you do so, you renew your own pain, renew—quite naturally—your sense of injury, of anger at the insult offered you. Yet this renewal works to no good end. It is useless, merely causing you to move in a vicious circle, since it cannot alter the facts or affect the result.'

'Yes—yes,' she said. 'Ah! how well you understand, dear Mr. Brownlow! Keep the letter. It is better out of my possession. And I feel less unhappy now that I have spoken to you. I longed for, yet dreaded, your coming. I knew that I should want to tell you of this—to speak freely to you; and yet I doubted if it were possible to talk on such a subject without seeming wanting in modesty. But you have made it easy by your sympathy—which I feel. It is wonderful. And I am very grateful—more grateful than I can express.'

For the first time her eyes had tears in them, and her brave lips quivered. I could bear no more. I turned and walked away a few steps, the sunshine gay among the pear blossom above my head, warm upon the turf at my feet. Ah, dear God, what a beautiful world—and I to go through it lonely all the days of my life!

*Nellie* picked up her bowl and came after me, a wistfulness in her sweet face.

'What is the matter, dear Mr. Brownlow? I have not offended you?' she said.

'No—ten thousand times, no,' I answered. 'But the times are somewhat out of joint, and—well—would to heaven I were a better, abler man to set them right!'

Just then *Braithwaite* hailed us from the doorway. We joined him and, with him, went back to the house.

*(To be continued.)*

## LAMENT BEFITTING THESE 'TIMES OF NIGHT.'

BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

*This Lament for martyr, soldier, and sage,**'Him who had walked through the times of night,'*

so apposite to these present times, is from verses in the MSS. of the British Museum, signed in her handwriting, 'Unfinished. C. Brontë. 70 lines, Novbr. 28th, 1834.' The lines bear no title. They were preserved by her in a collection of her writings for which she made a title-page, 'The Scrap Book. A Mingling of Many Things, compiled by Lord C. A. F. Wellesley. C. Brontë, March 17th, 1835.' The book contains 'chips from her workshop' during her nineteenth year, one of her happiest years at home. She was still using the pseudonym of her childhood days, associated with her idol, the Duke of Wellington. In this period she was celebrating heroes; compare her poems 'Richard Cœur de Lion and Blondel' and 'Saul.'

The obvious allusion in the first twelve lines is to the protomartyr of Christianity. The stanza upon the 'son of wisdom' refers to Socrates, the protomartyr of Paganism. The lament for the soldier, 'laid on the battle-plain,' is set like a gem between these stanzas, and flashes out her conception of the true patriot and hero. She ranks the dying common soldier,

*'His thoughts all for his fatherland,'*

with St. Stephen and Socrates, a trinity of martyrs of faith, of patriotism, and of philosophy.

I trust lovers of Charlotte Brontë will welcome, in this centennial year of her birth, the first publication of this poem.

GEORGE E. MACLEAN.

LAMENT for the Martyr who dies for his faith,  
 Who prays for his foes with his failing breath,  
 Who sees, as he looks to the kindling sky,  
 God and his captain, the Saviour, nigh;  
 Who sees the mighty recompense,  
 When soul is conquering flesh and sense;  
 Sees heaven and all its angels bright,  
 At the very end of his mortal fight,  
 At the black close of that agony  
 Which sets the impatient spirit free;

Then, as in Christ he sinks to sleep,  
 Weep for the Dying Martyr, weep.  
 And the soldier, laid on the battle-plain  
 Alone at the close of night, alone,  
 The passing off of some warlike-strain  
 Blent with his latest moan ;  
 His thoughts all for his fatherland,  
 His feeble heart, his unnerved hand  
 Still quiveringly upraised to wield  
 Once more his bright sword on the field,  
 While wakes his fainting energy  
 To gain her yet one victory ;  
 As he lies bleeding, cold and low,  
 As life's red tide is ebbing slow,  
 Lament for fallen bravery.

For the son of wisdom, the holy sage,  
 Full of knowledge and hoar with age,  
 Him who had walked through the times of night,  
 As if on his path a secret light  
 Lustrous and pure and silent fell ;  
 To all, save himself, invisible,  
 A secret ray from Heaven's own shrine  
 Poured on that spirit half divine,  
 And making a single Isle of light  
 In the wide blank ocean of Pagan night ;  
 Lament for him as you see him laid  
 Waiting for Death on the Dungeon bed,  
 The sickly lamp beside him burning,  
 Its dim ray falling on sorrow and gloom ;  
 Around him his sad disciples mourning,  
 As they watch for the hour of awful doom ;  
 And he, by coming death unshaken,  
 As if that slumber would soon be o'er,  
 As if all freshened he should waken  
 And see the light of morn once more.

Ay, on the sage's, the soldier's bier  
 I could drop many a pitying tear,  
 And as the martyr sinks to sleep  
 I could in love, in sorrow weep.

\* \* \* \* \*

*'THE IMPERIAL JUNKER.'*

*WHAT THE KAISER'S OWN MEN THOUGHT OF HIM.*

BY A NEUTRAL DIPLOMAT.

My work never brought me into intimate contact with court circles in Berlin, but—as the very existence of my country has hung for years on the tenuous thread of the Kaiser's whim—I have missed no opportunity (during the decade or more in which special missions for my Government have taken me to various foreign capitals) to study the War Lord through those who, in one way or another, had been given opportunities for forming their estimates of him at first hand. My surest and most intimate knowledge of the Kaiser was gained, perhaps, from German and Austrian diplomatic and consular officials who were either included in the inner circle of his personal friends, or whose duties had been of a character to reveal to them the hidden springs and cogs of their master's intricate machine of *welt-politik*. But very illuminative, also, I found the after-dinner confidences of several prominent Americans—notably two world-famous 'kings of industry' and an almost equally well known 'intellectual'—through whom the Kaiser had made cleverly calculated efforts to extend his influence in the United States.

The German and Austrian officials alluded to were, for the most part, pre-war acquaintances, but their attitudes toward the Kaiser and his world policies are of pertinent interest at this time as showing that the present apparently unbroken front of German unity is in reality a structure no less artificial and precarious than the tottering 'paper castle' of the German scheme of war finance. But two of the Americans—the very ones, too, I found most impressed by Wilhelm's 'guide-counsellor-and-friend' tactics—I have seen since the first of the present year, and it is a significant coincidence that each of them prefaced a scathing denunciation and sweeping repudiation of the Kaiser with the words, 'He lied to me!'

It is undoubtedly true, as has occasionally been stated in the British press by those intimately acquainted with Germany and

the Germans, that the Kaiser was not an ultra-militarist; or rather, that while he might be so rated according to the standard of less 'organised-for-war' countries than Germany, he was not so extreme in his views in this regard as many of the leaders of the so-called 'Military Party,' the royal member of which was the Crown Prince. But it is true that he was the leader in fact as well as in name—the soul and the mainspring—of what I may call the 'Deutschland-über-Alles' movement, which had for its end not only Teutonic 'kultural' supremacy, but also Teutonic commercial, financial, and—ultimately—political supremacy. And it is also true that he strove to attain these ends by methods so rough-shod, tactless and cynical that the arbitrament of the sword became the inevitable and only alternative to the national effacement of those countries which stood in Germany's way.

Let me make myself plain on this point. The Kaiser strove not only to win Germany a place in the sun, but to make Germany *the* place in the sun, and, in a sense, it is true, as he has so often claimed, that he desired and worked to bring this about by peaceful means. But—*he did not follow this course through any inherent love for, or humane predilection toward peace, but only because it was the cheaper way; because it would cost less in treasure and industrial potentiality; because it was calculated to set back Germany less than would the drain of even a victorious war.*

He hoped—by building up the most perfect military machine the world had ever known, supplemented by a navy unquestionably designed to equal and ultimately surpass that of Great Britain—to bluff and bully his way through to his goal without paying the price. The principal difference between the Kaiser and the German military party leaders was that the latter proposed to fight first and take what they wanted after all opposition had been crushed, while the former proposed trying to seize what he wanted first and to fight only if some one had the audacity to resist. Both were the schemes of international outlaws, with the militarists comparable to the brigand and the Kaiser to the burglar. That is the most one can say for the Kaiser's vaunted 'peacefulness.'

Twice or thrice—notably in the cases of Tsingtau and Bosnia-Herzegovina—the Imperial thief or his accomplices got away, unscathed, with the 'goods'; but at Agadir his nerve failed him and he was compelled to withdraw with empty pockets. The German military party leaders, knowing his aims and methods rendered ultimate war inevitable, bided their time far more patiently

than would have been the case had they not known the Kaiser was no lover of peace for its own sake; that either his bungling or his opportunism must finally make his means, like his end, identical with their own.

It was, therefore, not among even the extremest militarists that one found the deepest distrust of their impetuous emperor, but rather among the members of two other classes (I am not considering the Socialists in this article at all, because the feud between them and the Kaiser was known to all the world), the diplomats and the industrialists. Among German diplomatic and consular officials one met occasional personal favourites of the Kaiser who manifested a kind of sycophantic devotion to him; but the great majority of them—through their broader knowledge of the world, and especially their keener appreciation of the latent might of the British Empire—were restive and apprehensive over the parts they were being compelled to play in a policy which they knew could only lead to a conflict from which the chances of Germany's emerging victorious were very slender indeed. The most widely informed and most rational of these—and, therefore, the bitterest critics of the Kaiser—were men doing the same character of 'emergency work' on which I have so long been engaged myself. Sent on special missions of one kind or another to various parts of the world, they had an appreciation of world 'values,' a 'sense' for the set of political and racial undercurrents, such as no Prussian Junker ever attained to. Heart and soul in the 'Deutschland-über-Alles' crusade though they were, there is scarcely one of these I can recall who was not distrustful of the Kaiser's way of trying to bring the thing about, and, when opportunity offered for them to speak out, several were frankly condemnatory.

Of such was an unusually level-headed German who was a fellow passenger of mine on the British-India mailboat from Rangoon to Calcutta about five years ago. He claimed to have been on a special tour of investigation of Germany's Pacific colonies and to be taking advantage of his return trip to see what the Netherlands and England were doing in a colonial way. It was just at the crisis of the Agadir imbroglio, and a wireless message announcing the recall of the gunboat *Panther* (after Mr. Lloyd George's 'Mansion House' speech had brought home to the Kaiser the disagreeable truth that Great Britain was ready to stand by France) was the direct occasion of the conversation I am about to allude to.



Up to this moment I had found my friend unusually reticent on international politics, even for a German diplomat, but his palpable relief at the turn things had taken over Morocco seemed to have the effect of loosening his hitherto well-bitted tongue.

'Frankly,' he said, 'I am whole-heartedly glad to hear this news, even though, as a German, the *dénouement* is a very humiliating one. But for a long time I have been afraid that this periodic waving of a lighted torch over such a powder-magazine as Europe has become would cause an explosion. It will *have* to come if—if "someone" continues to scatter sparks in the future as he has done in the past. Please don't understand me as intimating that Germany would not render a good account of herself in such an event (you may be sure that her enemies would have some terrible surprises in store for them); but the folly of the thing lies in the fact that we are already on our way to win by "peaceful penetration" all that the most successful war could give us. *But if we should fight a war and chance to lose it—nay, even if it should result in more or less of a draw—Germany will never again have such an opportunity for a commercial—and through that, for a political—conquest of the world as she has enjoyed for the last two or three decades, and as she will continue to enjoy so long, but only so long, as we can keep at peace.* That is why I deplore so deeply the fact that we have such——' He checked the half-spoken German expletive that had leapt to the tip of his tongue and concluded with 'that we are not under a safer and saner leadership.'

Very similar views of the Kaiser's foreign policy I found were held by many outstanding figures among what I have called the German 'industrialists.' In this class I would include the heads of the great shipping companies and all of the important manufacturing save only those, like Krupps, which were engaged in turning out war supplies. Herr Ballin was, I am assured, one of those who watched the development of the Kaiser's insidiously ruthless policy with the gravest misgivings, and it is a German shipper only a shade less powerful than the head of the Hamburg-Amerika line that I am about to quote in this connection. I had met this gentleman more or less casually at several points during his tour of the Far East, but it was not until we chanced to be spending the same week-end at the Peak Hotel, Hongkong, that we had any chance to exchange views.



'How are German trade prospects in the East?' I asked him one evening as we sat over after-dinner coffee and cigars on the veranda of the hotel.

'Colossal, simply colossal,' was the reply. 'Quite beyond anything I had hoped to find. Will you please take a look at this,' and he took from his pocket and unfolded a little publication called 'The Daily Consular Reports,' published by the American State Department at Washington. Turning to a report written by the American Consul-General at Hongkong, he pointed to a table of figures preceded by a paragraph of comment. I have not the exact figures in mind at this moment, but their purport was to show the remarkable manner in which Germany's share of Hongkong's trade had increased until it was finally greater than that of Great Britain itself.

'That is the one most significant thing I have observed on my whole tour,' he said. 'To fully appreciate the weight of it, you must consider that not only is Hongkong a British port, but that it is also a port whose principal, almost its only, *raison d'être* was commercial. And now what do we see? To-day—on the strength of the official figures of the representative of a nation that specialises in figures—Germany has 60 per cent. of all its trade. And next year it will have more, and still more the year after. What do you think of that?'

'I think, in the first place,' I replied, 'that it seems rather effectually to dispose of Germany's contention that she is not enjoying the "freedom of the seas"; and, in the second place, that it would appear to be a remarkable tribute to the efficacy of Emperor William's *welt-politik*.'

The latter was a 'bait' I had often used successfully before under similar circumstances, and in this instance the 'rise' was sharp and clean. Indeed, I think he was rather glad to avail himself of the excuse to avoid the 'freedom of the seas' issue.

'Emperor William's *welt-politik*!' he fairly shouted, grasping the arms of his long reclining chair in his anger. 'Emperor William's *welt-politik* is the worst, almost the one, menace to the continuance of our commercial triumphs. We have done what we have in spite of, not because of, this kind of *welt-politik*. What is more, it is the one thing that threatens to bring all our achievements to nought. Yes, not only to check our advance, but even to put us back so far that we may never be able to regain the place

we hold to-day, to say nothing of the one we might attain to in the course of another decade of peace.

'See here!' he exclaimed, raising himself in his chair and peering down across the verdant slopes of the Peak to the arcaded squares of the city and the bay beyond, where the ships of all the world swung at their anchors in the turning tide and a thousand wide-eyed, high-sterned junks came winging home to roost for the night. 'Do you want to know the reason Germany has already the greater part of the trade of Hongkong? why Germany, if left alone, will ultimately control the trade of the world? There's the answer. Can you read it?'

Kowloon, with its newly-opened railway disappearing into the 'China-side' hills, the grim lines of the four-funnelled British battle-cruiser at the naval dock, the red rectangles of bunting sliding gently down the flag-poles at the sterns of a hundred British merchantmen at the boom of the sunset gun—I scanned these for the answer, but they all seemed to argue the other way—against German dominance.

'I give it up,' I said finally. 'What is it? Where is it?'

'There,' he replied, pointing to the solid blocks of tall office buildings in the heart of the town and along the Bund. 'You see, do you not, that some of the buildings are dark and deserted, and that in others the lights are being turned on? Well then! The lighted ones are German, the dark ones English. *That* is the answer. The English are at the Cricket Club (see the lights on the veranda) and at Happy Valley—you saw them trooping to one or the other all the way from three o'clock onward. But in some of the German offices those lights will be burning at nine and ten o'clock, and even up to twelve or one on the nights before mail day. *That* is the answer. We Germans are winning the trade of the world because of our capacity for, our willingness to, *work, work, work,*' he concluded, punctuating the final words with blows upon the wicker arms of his chair.

He puffed his cigar in angry impatience for a few moments, peering moodily into the gathering darkness, before resuming. 'The continuance of our present rate of progress would win us everything if only we could contrive to remain free to concentrate our energies upon it. Instead of working to that end, however, it is as though every move of—from a certain quarter, was deliberately calculated to provoke, to embroil us with, the very powers whom it would serve every material interest we have

to remain friendly with. A very little more of the brand of *welt-politik* that the Kaiser' (he did not attempt an euphemism this time) 'has been launching during the last few years, and we will not, cannot, be left free to win on to the goal that is already in sight. There is, perhaps, an even chance—certainly not better than that—that a great European war might be a short-cut to our commercial supremacy; but, the way things are going now, we take *no* chances. And if we failed to win the war, we could never have the same clear field again. You will understand now why I feel so strongly opposed to an Imperial policy which, if not radically changed, cannot but end in war.'

Between diplomats, colonial officials, manufacturers, shippers, etc., I could mention at least a score of Germans of outstanding prominence whom I heard express views so nearly identical with those already quoted that it will hardly be worth while setting them down here. (These would include, I may say, two men who have rendered important service—one politically and the other as an engineer—to the Kaiser in Asiatic Turkey, and another—whom I had met in East Africa and Samoa—who is a member of the present Cabinet, and, moreover, prominently mentioned for the 'reconstruction period' Premiership.) Among all of these there was not a single individual who did not have a far clearer comprehension of 'world problems'—a less 'warped' international perspective—than the Kaiser (from the very one-sidedness of his life) could possibly have had. They may be taken as thoroughly representative of the very small class of Germans whose minds and observations had been sufficiently broad to have made their opinions and admonitions worth heeding. No less 'Deutschland-über-Alles' than the Kaiser himself, theirs was a practical policy which might have succeeded, while his was a mad piece of international adventuring that not only marked the Kaiser himself for a fall, but—since his country elected to follow him—also made inevitable the downfall of Germany. Had counsellors of this type been heeded, there is little doubt that *welt-politik* would have been exercised in a manner that would have prevented its becoming, for many years at least, the veritable boomerang into which the Kaiser's inordinate vanity, cynicism and hot-headedness have converted it. From Great Britain's standpoint, however, there can be no doubt that it was best that the 'Imperial Bungler' should have been allowed to have his own way, that the 'showdown' should have been forced at the time it was. The Germany of a

decade from now would have been far richer, far more wonderful, far more difficult to defeat than the Germany of to-day. Just as I have heard so many far-sighted Germans say in the course of the last decade, the Kaiser, with his 'shining armour' and his trumpetings, has, in the end, only played into the hands of his enemies by awakening the lion which he might have netted—had, indeed, already half netted—in its sleep.

The interesting question which now arises is what attitude these powerful leaders, who feared, distrusted and warned against the Kaiser's policy for more than a decade, are going to take toward that ill-advised monarch when the once rapidly rising edifice of German commercial and political domination which they had done so much to rear, finally comes down, as come it must, in ruins. Most, if not all, of the men I have alluded to or quoted were already rowing in the Kaiser's war-galley when the explosion they had so long foreseen and dreaded rent Europe in twain and left them only the dust of their past achievements and less than the ashes of their hopes and dreams. Doubtless they have strained obediently if sullenly at their oars (I have read glowing accounts in the German papers of what several of them have done); but surely not without *arrière pensée*, not without thoughts of how differently things might have gone if even an amiable nonentity had been their ruler instead of an imperial adventurer.

The fact that, even in the present development of events, Germany's future, both immediate and remote, looms far darker than even the most prescient or pessimistic of those who followed so mistrustfully the bellicose gesturings of 'The Mailed Fist' could have well anticipated, must bode a state of feeling against the man who is responsible for it all that augurs ominously for the lone figure at the helm of the German ship of state when it becomes a case of *saute qui peut* in the final wreck. When this day comes—how different a one will it be from 'Der Tag' to which the hoodwinked German so long has lifted his glass!—'I told you so' will be the mildest of the reproaches that will be launched at the wrecker from the lips of the men whose task it will be to salvage the foundered ship as best they may.

Cut off by the pall of the more imminent war clouds, we on the outside have as yet had little chance to gauge the force of the storm that is gathering to break upon Germany from within. Whether the breaking of that storm will precede and accelerate the coming of peace, or whether the coming of peace will precede

and accelerate the breaking of the storm, it is still too early to say. But break it must, sooner or later, and when this hour arrives I feel that I know enough of the temper of the men who distrusted and hated the Kaiser before the war to be safe in saying, that whatever of his just deserts he may have escaped receiving at the hands of the Allies he will stand every chance of having meted out to him at the hands of his own outraged people.

## THE OLD CONTEMPTIBLES : AT ALL COSTS.

BY BOYD CABLE.

ONE might have supposed it impossible for the Colonel to have found a single favourable condition about the coming fight. His battalion had withered away to little more than half its strength; that remaining half was almost completely worn out with want of sleep, with constant cruel fighting, with forced marching; had scarcely been brought out of the water-logged trenches to rest before being marched up into them again, had the prospect before them now of a desperate fight against enormous odds with no cover but the inadequate scratches that in those days passed for trenches, and with even these battered and smashed by shell fire, swimming in water and liquid mud.

It might even be difficult to understand any reason for his 'Well, thank Heaven the orders are plain and simple enough this time,' since those orders were 'to hold the position *at all costs* until relieved,' the words 'at all costs' being heavily underlined, if one had not known the nightmare uncertainty that in the Retreat-Advance days worried the harassed commanding officers to a point of distraction. Usually the orders were full of instructions to do this if the Germans retired, to do that if they advanced in strength, to do something else if they attacked any one of a dozen points; to conform to the movements of a certain regiment, to support the advance or cover the retirement of another or another—to have, in fact, enough possibilities to consider and act promptly upon to have kept a dozen heads and a hundred eyes very fully occupied; and all, of course, in addition to the C.O.'s own paramount job of fighting his battalion.

So that after all there was some cause for his relief at the simplicity of the orders which this time bade him hold on 'at all costs,' even although it might well be that those orders were the death-warrant of himself and most of his remaining men. He had no doubts as to the nature of the struggle close ahead; indeed there was so little of a secret about it that every officer and man of the battalion was fully aware that the Germans had determined on an attack which was to break through the thin British line. There was to be no manœuvring, no feinting here and striking there, no cunning tactics about this attack. The Germans were going to strike straight and hard and heavy, and burst through by sheer hard

fighting and weight of numbers—'Leastways,' as the brigade signaller put it in passing on this cheerful intelligence to the battalion signallers, 'that's what they think they're goin' to do.'

'I like their bloomin' cheek,' said the signaller who took the message. 'I wonder what they fancy we'll be doin' while they break through.' The fact that a weak battalion of British infantry should consider itself fit to stem the advance of ten times their number of picked German troops did not appear to strike him in any way as being a piece of equally 'bloomin' cheek.'

The promised attack, however, did not develop for the next forty-eight hours, and during the whole of that time the battalion had to lie still and suffer such an inferno of bombardment, such a purgatory of bitter cold and driving rain, such a misery of knee-deep mud and crouching in painfully cramped positions, that at the end of the time they were openly praying for an attack, British or German, they did not care which, so long as it ended or even relieved the intolerable waiting.

'I made up my mind a month ago that I was bound to be killed,' said Sergeant Billy Ruff of 'C' Company disgustedly. 'I'd sorter reconciled myself to bein' blotted out by a bullet, or blasted off the earth by a Black Maria, or skewered on a bayonet; but blow me if I ever counted on bein' drowned in a two-foot mud puddle as I looks like bein' now.'

'Why don't the *soors*<sup>1</sup> come on an' fight it out,' said Corporal Smedley. 'They *bukked*<sup>2</sup> enough about wot they was goin' to do. Why don't they *hiherao*<sup>3</sup> an' do it. I'm about sick o' this shellin' game.'

'The shellin' is bad enough,' agreed Sergeant Ruff, 'but I'm sicker o' this swimmin' gymkhana. They ought to serve us out a cork jacket an' a swimmin' suit an' a harpoon a-piece instead o' a rifle, to play this game proper.'

He was certainly fairly entitled to call the shelling 'bad enough.' It was the worst they had known yet, and that, for men who had been in it from the first days of Mons, was saying a good deal. The Germans appeared to have selected their portion of the front for the heaviest concentration of their artillery, and a rain of shells fell without ceasing night or day on the battered trenches. The men kept what cover they could, but that was little use against monster shells which blew to fragments them and their cover together. The British artillery was completely overwhelmed, and although it had struggled gallantly to maintain the unequal contest,

<sup>1</sup> Slang Hindustani—'pigs.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Talked.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Come on.'



was unable to afford the slightest relief to the suffering infantry. The casualties in the battalion mounted steadily, and apparently it was merely a matter of time until it should be utterly destroyed; but the men, although they grumbled deep and loud about the weather and the wet and the mud, the slowness of the Germans to attack, the bully beef and the biscuits and the missing of a rum ration, uttered no single grumble about the fate that kept them there or the wounds and death that carried them off singly and in groups.

At dawn of the third day the shelling rose to its highest pitch of fury. The wet ground shook to the roaring blast of heavy high-explosive, the air pulsed and sang to the shriek of passing shells, the crack of bursting high-explosive 'woolly bears,' the rip and thud of their shrapnel showers. The noise was deafening, the smoke and reek of high-explosive fumes blinding and choking. The flank of the battalion rested on a road which ran through the British and German lines, and the trenches to both sides of this road appeared to have been selected for the heaviest share by far of the bombardment.

'They'll charge across the open and down the road,' said Sergeant Billy Ruff. 'You see now if I'm not right.'

'I don't care a two-anna-bit how or where they charges,' answered the private he spoke to, 'if so be they'd only be *jildi*<sup>1</sup> an' get on wi' the drill.'

'Here they come,' said the sergeant hurriedly. '*Dekko*<sup>2</sup> the road. Wot did I tell you? 'Strewth, an' there ain't 'arf a mob of 'em, I don't think.'

'Hold your fire, men,' called one of the officers. 'Wait till they get well in the open. Pass the word—hold your fire;' and down the line of the wrecked trench ran the order from man to man, 'Hold your fire—pass the word—hold your fire.'

So they held their fire, although on the other side of the road the trenches had already opened at the longer range. Deceived apparently by the silence into believing that the battalion had retired or been annihilated by the storm of shell-fire, the Germans poured out into the open and swarmed down in solid mass. They sang in a deep chorus as they came running heavily and waving their rifles over their heads.

'Blimey, 'ark at 'em singing,' said Sergeant Billy Ruff. 'Come on, my bloomin' canaries, you'll get somethin' to sing about presently.'

<sup>1</sup> 'Quick.'

<sup>2</sup> 'See.'



And they did 'get something.' When they were within two hundred yards of the trench an officer's whistle shrilled, a line of heads and rifle barrels appeared above the parapet, and in one long rolling crash the rifles broke out in the 'mad minute' of fire. Now, in the training of the old Regular Army the 'mad minute' was a firing practice to which a good deal of time and attention was devoted, and a remarkable proficiency attained in the two essential respects of speed in firing and accuracy of aim. Since it was a practice in which this particular battalion had acquired a notable reputation at a target and range immeasurably more difficult than was now presented to it, the effect on the dense mass of the attack may be imagined. The front rank was simply swept away in the first five seconds of the minute, and for another full fifty-five seconds the bullets beat down on the block of men, chopped up and cut away the advancing face of it, exactly as a chaff-cutter slices to fragments the straw bundle pushed under its destroying knives. At the end of the minute the mass had come to a stand-still; at the end of another it had broken and shredded away and was swirling back to cover with the relentless bullets still hailing after it and tearing through and through it.

'Funny thing,' said Sergeant Ruff grimly, 'I don't seem to 'ave 'eard no singin' lately. P'raps them Prussians 'as found out they come to the wrong room for the smokin' concert.'

The respite was very short. Another mass of Germans swarmed out from their trenches and came on at a hard run, and again the British rifles broke out in a devastating whirlwind of fire. The attack was pushed harder and closer this time, till the defenders of the trench could simply point their rifles and fire without putting eye to sights and yet not miss because of the nearness and size of the target. Again the attack broke, or rather it was withered and burnt away as it came and came into the face of the furnace-blast of fire; but this time the battalion did not cease to work bolt and trigger at top speed, because on their flank across the road the rush had come further and was already in places pouring in and down over the trenches. The regiment there had to give up the bullet for the bayonet and fight now for their bare lives; but the weight of numbers was too much for them, and gradually, still fighting fiercely, they were overborne, pressed back, thrust from the trenches yard by yard, killed where they stood in the parts where they still clung stubbornly and refused to budge. The regiment was practically annihilated, and their trenches were in the hands of the enemy.

'Now,' said Sergeant Ruff, 'this is where we gets ready to hang out the "House Full" sign.'

'Going to be a regular Guest Night in Mess, eh, sergeant? and every prospect of a full table,' said a youthful lieutenant, grinning—and fell forward in the sergeant's arms with the laugh still on his lips and a bullet through his heart.

The Colonel had been killed by a shell the first day, and before he went he passed the word to the next senior, 'Don't forget, Major . . . simple orders . . . hold on at all costs.'

The Major was not long in command before he was out of action with a shattered thigh, and following him acting C.O. after C.O. was killed or wounded, until now the command was in the hands of the only captain left in the battalion. And each C.O. in turn received or knew his simple orders—'Hold on at all costs,' and no C.O. of them all had any doubt as to how they were to be carried out.

So it was that when the trenches on their flank went, and the immediate prospect before the battalion was of out-and-out annihilation, the Captain made his way round the trenches, splashing through muddy pools streaked and tinted with crimson, stumbling over the dead, stepping as carefully as might be over the men too sorely wounded to move aside, and repeated to his few remaining officers and senior N.C.O.'s the clear instructions, 'Hold on at all costs.'

'Not much doubt, sir, of how much the cost will be,' one very junior lieutenant answered him.

'No,' said the Captain gravely; 'but we've done our job so far, and that's always something. Now we've only to make a good finish to it.'

'We'll do that all right,' said the lieutenant confidently. 'We'll be cornered soon, but there's enough of us left to make them feel our teeth. And anyhow, we've made them pay a pretty full price already for this patch of ground,' and he motioned with his hand out towards where the open out in front of their trench was carpeted thick with the German dead.

An orderly, stooping low, splashed along the trench to them. 'The wire's through again, sir,' he said, 'and Brigade wishes to speak to you if you can spare a minute.' He said nothing of how the wire had been got through, or of how its repairing had cost another good half-dozen casualties—which in itself is another tale well worth the telling. The Captain went to the telephone dug-out and crawled into the shallow, wet-dripping cave and called

the Brigade and spoke with them there for five minutes. The Adjutant who was at the other end was an old personal friend of the Captain's, but chiefly because neither knew the instant the wire might be cut again they first talked strict business and left personal affairs out of it.

'Brigadier says to ask what chance have you,' asked the Adjutant abruptly. 'How much longer can you hold on?'

'Ten minutes after they attack in force,' said the Captain with equal brevity; 'fifteen with luck; twenty at the outside. Trenches across the road are gone, you know, and we're getting cut up badly with enfilade fire now. There's nothing to stop them getting round behind us, so I expect to be attacked front, rear, and flank. We can't stand that off long.'

'They've managed to spare us a few companies of supports,' said the Adjutant quickly. 'They're occupying the line behind you now, and the moment they're ready they'll be pushed up to help hold your trenches and retake the ones on your flank.'

'If they don't hurry,' said the Captain, 'they'll have the job of retaking both lots. By the sound of the firing I fancy the attack is coming now. I must get along and see.'

'All right. Good luck, Jacky.'

'Good-bye,' said the Captain. 'You know the messages I'd like sent if . . . And tell the General we held on to the end. Good-bye.'

He was gone, and at the other end the Adjutant sat for some minutes listening to the empty singing of the wire. That cut off suddenly to the flat deadness that means a broken connection, and the Adjutant dropped the useless instrument and hurried out to try to catch a glimpse of the last act. It was little enough he could see, for a driving misty rain obscured the view again; but from that little and from the fragments that he gathered after from the handful of wounded brought in, it was easy enough to piece out the finish.

The attack developed, as the Captain had predicted, on front, rear, and flank. Under cover of a storm of frontal and enfilade fire the Germans swarmed up along the rear of the battalion's trenches. A score or two of men were faced about to try to beat back this rear attack, but their bullets were as powerless to stop it as pebbles flung in the face of a breaking wave. The rear attack secured a footing in the trenches and began to spread slowly along them. Their progress was disputed furiously, but in the end the remnants of the battalion were beaten back to a point where a

couple of shallow communication trenches ran back to the supporting trench on the one side, and another branched off forward to the ruins of the front-line trench. Even then a few score men might have saved themselves by taking the road to the rear. None did, but to the last man turned frontward and joined the handful of their fellows. In the end the remains of the battalion clung together to a few yards of battered trench that twisted about the telephone dug-out, and finished out the fight there.

Few as they were, it took some minutes to come at them, and before the last hand-to-hand scrimmage had finished there came from the mist to rearward a clatter of rifle fire, the rush of a charging line. The Germans had been so occupied with their task of clearing out the last of the defence that the fresh attack took them by surprise. The rescuing companies were in on them before they could face about to meet the charge, so that the charge went crashing home, swept the trenches clear in a wild five minutes' work, pushed the Germans across the road, and drove into the trenches there after them. At this critical moment another two companies charged in from the rear—companies in those days, remember, were given, and cheerfully accepted, the work of battalions, just as platoons took and did the work of companies; and the Germans, taken in flank and rear, were accounted for to the last man in killed, wounded, and prisoners.

The Captain was picked up in that last patch of trenches the battalion had held. He carried wounds enough to have killed a dozen, and his last word again was, 'I'm glad we were able to hold on—till we were relieved.'

They found Sergeant Billy Ruff, too, with no more than a few flesh wounds and a smashed leg. The Adjutant, in the piecing out of the end of the story, sat by him and asked questions while the sergeant's wounds were being dressed and he sucked hard on a damp cigarette. 'At all costs, the orders was,' said the sergeant at the finish. 'An' that patch o' duck-pond trenches has just cost me seven-an'-six that was owed me by my corporal that's killed, a cock-eyed leg, an' a carcass full o' rheumatics for the rest o' my days; an' it's cost the army the finest set of officers that ever stepped, an' the best battalion o' fightin' men it owned.'

'Amen to all of that,' said the Adjutant. 'But—you held on.'

'Course we held on,' said Sergeant Billy Ruff, his voice showing just a shade of surprise at the comment. 'Y'see we was ordered to hold on.'

PRESS BUREAU: PASSED FOR PUBLICATION.

## CHILDREN'S CHILDREN.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL G. F. MACMUNN, C.B., D.S.O.

OLD Schwartz rode over the *bult* on his lean *veldt* pony, his corduroys flapping in the wind and his *veldt schoen* barely resting in the stirrups. And the prospect pleased him. Not a roof-tree could he see except his own. The blue sheen on the scrub and the shimmer on the *vlei* grass gave an air of peace on a road untold that men have searched the world for since time was. Away on the slopes were some of his own cattle, and a herd of his own horses; several generations of mares, each with their foals, were galloping down to the pan for the evening. The prospect was such as every old *voortrekker* dreamed of and looked for.

Gabriel Jacobus Schwartzberg was a *voortrekker* in the sense that, a baby in arms, he had rumbled up in the great oxwain, with his father, old Gabriel Hermanus (he being long known as young Garvie, pronounced 'Harvie'), had seen the republic grow and wane and come again. He had brought a secret commando across from the Free State to help Piet Cronje crush the *roineks* at Potchefstroom, and as a young man had fired his father's old *roei* into Harry Smith's force at Boomplaatz—and perhaps shot the ensign who lies in his tombstoned grave there. Therefore an old implacable he was, 'a stout ould Pratestant' like the Ulster man, if ever there was one.

The Great Boer War had seen him too old save to ride transport, but ridden he had and then hidden in the Gnaadeberg till the republics had gone down in sorrow, and he for the time had cursed the God of David for forsaking His chosen; till one day a slim *predikant* had explained that the Lord worked in wondrous ways, and that they had already got the country back from the *verdomde roineks*. It was easy enough so to describe what everyone in England, since party politics are dead, has recognised as an act of statesmanship; and the *predikant* wanted fifty sheep as a contribution to his new manse.

So old Schwartz took heart of grace, and, finding that no *roineks* came his way, sat in the *stoep* in the sun, smoking away the remaining years that God gave him, his sun-dried old eyes peering out across the shimmer of the veldt, his rifle by his side, and the

volume of the Sacred Law on a table, for it is so the old Dutch wait their end, rich in years and in inheritance, as the Lord has promised. And in the year of grace 1915 it was far, far past the threescore years and ten. Yet had it not turned to sorrow and tears. Daily did old Schwartz ride round his estate by the *vlei*, where the springbok dwelt, and over the *bult* to Bessie's Dam, where his son lived hidden from view, and back by *Saltpan*, past his own oxen to his own old house at *Sweetfontein*, the sweet spring that old Hermanus had found and built beside, with Marie, his wife, and little Garvie, his son, far back in the ages, as time is counted in South Africa.

But now in his old, old age great trouble had come on old Schwartz, and he sat long o' days in the *stoep* peering out into the shimmer. The Great War in Europe was nothing to him. At ninety-two, be one never so hale, kings may rise and fall, and wars may come and go, and leave ninety-two sitting in the *stoep*.

The rising of De Wet had stirred him not. That was a foolishness. Had not the *predikant* explained that Dutch slimness had given them the country back these eight years past. Louis Botha had very properly settled *his* goose, and the *trek* into German South-west Africa and Namaqualand was right. The German had no business there at all, *Oud* Brand had always said so. He knew what Germans were, he had known the old Legion men whom the English had settled on the land after that Crimean War of theirs—pretty settlers they were. Look at that Colonel Schermbrücker, bah! *Verdomde Kerbs* every one. But now—a dreadful story had come up from Philippolis. Folk said that Afrikanders were going to Europe to help the English in this mad war of theirs.

So old Schwartz was sore perplexed, as well he might be, and Julie, his wife, was away to town to *Nachtmaal*, the monthly Communion; an old body too, as years went, near thirty years his junior, and his third wife forby; and wise withal.

In the *Zit-kammer* hung a huge gold frame, and in the frame an illuminated border, and within the border a big black coffin, and round the coffin the names of the wives and the children who had died. The names were many, for the Boers bear more than they rear; the little cemetery above the dam had many little graves. Beneath the golden frame stood a table, and on it an old faded wool-worked cloth, and on the table stood the great family Bible in Dutch, the volume of the Sacred Law in all its glory, and therein were written the names of all the wives and all the children of



Gabriel Schwartzberg and his wives, and the names were more numerous than those of the golden frame. Eleven sons and three daughters still survived. And the last were the entries of Julie Armand Duplessis, his last wife, and her sons, of whom two survived.

In the sacred volume also stood the names of Gabriel Hermanus Schwartzberg, born 1798, and Marie Duplooy, his wife, born 1802 and married in 1820, and of *his* father, Gabriel Petrus Schwartzberg, born 1760, and of his wife, Flavie Terblanche, married in 1782.

The record read like the record of the Patriarchs, and one might notice how the wives were always French, as indeed he who looks below the surface has always noticed, that the Dutch are more French than Dutch, Huguenots all. There are more Delareys, and Fouchées, and Terblanches, and Duplooy's, and Duplessis, and Duprés, and Oliviers, and Villiers, and Dutoits, and Mathias, and Krugers, and Cronjes, and Bothas than ever there be Vandermerwes, or Forsters, or Rensbergs, or Vanzyls; which folk forget, or that they who strive most to preserve the *Taal* stamped out the French with a bitter fury. It is further to be remembered by those who care for such varieties that when the Emperor Napoleon would restore the old nobility, he found that Madame Guillotine had left the heirdom of the *Ducs* de Richelieu, the family of du Plessis and the great cardinal, in the Boer Huguenot family of Duplessis, and further that the heir, a placid, contented farmer, settled on the land a hundred years and more, and married to Helena Duplooy, refused the offer of land and estates in France. And so the rightful heir remained where he was, to trek later to the Krapzak Rivier in the Free State and speak the *Taal* for all time. Little there remains of the old France, save in those natural manners and courtesy and more that surprise those who really know the old Cape Dutch. Some of the old legends remain in some of the old families, cherished by the women more than the men, as such things are the world over.

Thinking nothing of such things, old Schwartz had grown as the other Dutch, and his own *veldt* was all the world to him, so that as he came back from Bessie's Dam to talk of the outer world, his own solitary farm, with the poplars of Lombardy growing on the dam where Julie had planted them, her first communion after they married, peace for a while came over his vexed mind. At ninety-two perhaps even the thought of khaki hardly vexes for long.

But it was true; not only had the Dutch quelled their rebellions



alongside the English, and had taken the German State, but they were actually fitting out troops to help the English overseas.

Now the English are a curious folk. The world understands them not, which is not to be marvelled at, since they certainly do not understand themselves—but as the lamented Price Collier wrote, they—the folks of a tiny island, own and rule a sixth of the world. The writers tell you that they are antiquated and unbusinesslike, *but they govern a sixth of the world!* Their navy is known to be bad and their army absurd, *'but they govern a sixth of the world!'* Their finance, folk say, is archaic, and their politics a folly, *'but,'* reiterates Price Collier, *'they govern a sixth of the world.'*

And so goes on the incomprehensible, with the persistent result, and still the world, and especially the poor Teutonic world, understands them not. Their allies the French have tried very hard, until some glimmer of light on island minds has come to them, and with that light, faith—faith to believe that, however dull, and queer, and gruff, and awkward the English might be, there is something to be liked and trusted in the queer methods that so successfully and so illogically govern one-sixth of the world.

Old Schwartz's horse lolloped over the crisp red grass of the *vlei*, and a brace of *Kuoorhaan*, the scolding hens, rose with a whirr and a clatter that roused the old man from his dreams, and he pulled himself together to cross the slope to his farm. The sun was low over the *veldt*, and the light of fairyland was falling on the countryside, as he rode into the yards—past the sheep-kraals. There were geese under the willows picking at the water-cress in the fountain cut, and the boys were driving in the cows. Strangers had arrived, and Schwartz could see old Tanta Fouché, his half-sister, a woman of seventy, out in the *stoep*, and there were strange horses in the kraal.

Four figures in khaki sat in the *stoep* drinking coffee, and old Schwartz climbed down from his horse and stiffly mounted the steps, while the new-comers rose to greet him. It was his son Hermanus from Slipklip Oost, and with him a man he knew, Commandant Jacobus Delarey of Witkopjie, but in khaki, with rifle and bandolier. Why in khaki?

Old Schwartz shook hands in silence, and peered under his shaggy eyebrows at the other two, also in khaki, with rifles and bandoliers. They were his grandsons, Willie and Munik, his two favourites, 'the children's children that are an old man's crown.'

The old man passed his hand over his brow in perplexity.  
'What are you all doing in khaki? I don't understand, Hermanus.'

'The boys are going with the commando, father!'

'What commando?'

'The new commando that is going to help the English in Egypt, and the French.'

'Going to help the English, my grandsons—going to wear khaki? I will never allow that.'

'But, father, they are all doing it; all the young men are going. General Smuts is raising many commandos, English and Dutch. The English are fighting to protect the world against Germany. I have read it out to you, and mother has told you of the war.'

'Your mother never told me that the farmers were going to wear khaki and be English soldiers. Cursed be any of mine who join the English.'

And the old man drew himself up and glared, and his old eyes blazed under his eyebrows.

'Man and boy have I hated them and fought them, and never trusted them, and now, cursed be you, Hermanus, if you let them go—cursed be you, Willie! cursed be you, Munik! . . .'

The boys had shrunk back into the doorway, and Commandant Delarey was biting his beard, when a Cape cart came clattering up the courtyard to the *stoep*.

'Here is mother,' called Hermanus, and an old lady descended with many parcels and called out to them to help her, and came up the steps like a woman of forty rather than one of seventy. Small and dark and shrivelled and active, the black grapes on her head shaking and dancing, and her bead cape quivering.

'Why, grandsons! come along and get my parcels, or you'll get no fresh coffee. Why, what's the matter, Hermanus! What's wrong with grandfather?'

The old man stood erect with his hand still half raised on high.

'What are you doing, Gabriel?'

'Father curses Willie and Munik for joining the English to help the French.'

'Oh, does he? then let him wait till he has heard me. I'll have none of his Dopper ways now. What is the trouble, Gabriel?'

The old man raised his hand: 'Cursed are the Dutch who join the English commandos! Cursed . . .'

'Now, listen to me, Gabriel Schwartzberg. Am I faithful wife of yours?'

'That have you ever been, Julie.'

'Then will you listen to me, and keep your cursing to the end, old man!'

The old man bowed his head and lowered his hand, and sank to a chair that Hermanus brought him.

'Listen, then, Gabriel Jacobus Schwartzberg. The English are helping the French to fight those German brutes who would make slaves of all. You remember all I read you that the Germans did to the Belgian girls at Louvain. Did ever the English behave like that here? You know they did not. Did I love the English? You know I did not. But they were fair and honest and kindly. The *Mori Kaptan* who took me away to the *laager* treated me as if I had been his mother. Did they not give us back our Government? Oh yes, I know the *Predikant* told you it was Boer slimness got it back, but he wanted money from you for his manse. It was English slimness who knew how to manage free people, not like your dirty Germans. Besides they are helping the French, whom you Germans attacked. I am French. I am a Duplessis, and I have not forgotten it, nor my mother, nor my mother's mother, for all we married you fusty old *veldt* Dutch. And your mother told me the same, and she was a Duplooy, and her mother was a Terblanche. Look in the old Bible and see! You men are so busy shooting bucks and smoking, you don't think of such things, but we women do. So, Mr. Dutchman, my grandsons shall wear khaki and go and help the English and the French and those poor Belgian girls, and you shall give them your blessing, Gabriel, or I will go right away to my brother Armande Duplessis, who is *vriede reckter*<sup>1</sup> at Fauriesberg, and *Tanta* will make your coffee. You know how you will like that.'

Julie was a very voluble person when stirred, and when she had finished the others murmured '*Ja! Ja!*' while Commandant Delarey brought his rifle-butt with a ring on to the stones and said: 'The Vrouw is right, *mynheer*, and the boys must come.'

The fire had gone out of the old man's eye. Fire at ninety-two is not constant, and old *Tanta* coming to say supper was ready clinched the situation.

After supper Hermanus read the word of God from the Second Book of Kings out of the great Bible, and poor old Schwartz was taken to bed to hear more for his pains.

<sup>1</sup> Justice of the Peace.

Julie was a strategist and an advocate. Next morning early, before dawn, after the simple wont of the simple Dutch, the songs of David in simple point swelled in the morning air, and the quavering voice of old Schwartz led the chaunt.

It was the glorious words of the *Dominus Regnavit*, and it suited the donning of khaki and the old man's surrender.

'The Lord is King, and hath put on glorious apparel and girded Himself with strength.

'The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly, but yet the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier.'

As the sun glinted under the *stoep*, old Schwartz was being shown the glories of a Mark VII rifle, and the merits of the pointed bullet, while the horses were saddling in the *kraal*. Later, as Commandant Delarey marched off his commando, rifles on hip in due and ancient form, it was Julie who waved a Union flag and a tricolour, while old Schwartz stood on the *stoep* and gave his blessing from the Book:

'In courage keep your heart  
In strength lift up your hand.'

## COINCIDENCES.

BY SIR LAURENCE GOMME.

A FEW weeks ago some remarkable examples of coincidences were recorded in the newspapers. They were the actual experiences of the writers, or the guaranteed experiences of relatives or intimate friends. Their genuineness cannot be called in question. But they are all isolated examples, each of them being communicated by different correspondents. Even as such they were sufficiently remarkable to make it worth while to ask whether coincidences in the order of things human play a definite part in life's drama, in the science of life perhaps one ought to say, or whether they are so accidental and non-influential as to have no bearing upon the problems of life.

If they have a bearing on the unexplored meanings of human action, they seem to me to belong to individual, and not to social, man. They might explain the individual action of Julius Caesar, Napoleon, and the great ones of the world; they might be one of the influences which have apparently made individual men rulers of human destiny for a time. But to prove any such theory as this, even if it be a possible theory at all, one must deal, not with single examples of coincidences which occur to different people, but with a series of examples which have happened to one individual. The comparative study of coincidences in separate lives would, it occurs to me, be not only scientifically valuable, but of intense interest to all who are fond of reading the lives of men who have made a mark in the world.

So much for the psychological aspect of what may be expected from the study of coincidences. In my small life as a student and public servant it happens that I have had two or three remarkable examples of coincidences. They principally belong to my literary life, and have always been of special interest to me; they have remained in my recollection as a sort of indication that the line I was taking was, on the whole, the right line. Upon my pledged assurance that they are all true, I propose to relate them for the amusement of my readers, and with a hope that more important cases may be related in due course. They are merely anecdotal and have no other interest beyond, perhaps, supplying a new chapter of the 'Curiosities of Literature.' I propose as far

as possible to treat them chronologically in groups, as they have no possible relationship one with another. They will be related quite simply, and with many circumstantial details omitted.

The first incident which I have to relate is connected with my friendship with Henry Charles Coote, lawyer and historian. I had lent to me a copy of his little book, 'A Neglected Fact in English History' (London, 1864), and arranged to begin reading it one Sunday morning in 1876, while I walked through Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens on my way to luncheon at Shepherd's Bush. The brilliant little preface fascinated me. The still more brilliant pages in which his thesis of a Roman origin for the people of Britain was developed carried me right away, and I did not put the book down until I had finished it. As I read the last page, I remember saying to myself 'I must know this man and I believe I shall know him.' I met Mr. Coote at the first meeting of what was afterwards the Council of the Folklore Society on December 19, 1877. He sat next to me, and to my delight, after the meeting had concluded, he proposed to walk with me as far as Waterloo Place, with the result that we stood opposite the Athenæum Club for over an hour talking of things that interested both of us. He promised me a copy of his 'Neglected Fact,' and I have the volume before me, as I write, with his inscription to me written on the title-page. From that day we became fast friends. He never ceased to do kindnesses to me, and I never ceased to think of him with gratitude and affection. We used to discuss his special view of British history, and I gradually fell away from accepting this view. This made no difference to our intercourse until the end came. It impressed me with extraordinary force. Mr. and Mrs. Coote always spent their summer holiday in Italy, the Italy he loved so well, and returning in October, I generally met him for the first time after their journey at the November meeting of the Society of Antiquaries. In 1884 I went to this meeting as usual, but all during the evening I had been feeling strangely uneasy. I did not expect to see Mr. Coote there. And he was not there. On the next day I called upon him with every foreboding of evil, and I found him stricken down with paralysis, the seizure having taken place the night before just at the time when I was feeling so strangely anxious about him. Perhaps this may be a mere case of telepathy between two people with kindred ideas, but the coincidences are too close for this hypothesis. They are indeed too close to be described in anecdotal form, but I like the recollection to open the story of coincidences which I have to narrate.

I have one other coincidence to record, which belongs to the same sort of experience. After my father died, my mother and sisters came to stop with me for a short time while their affairs were being settled. Some pieces of family furniture, portraits, etc. were brought to my house. Among these was a library chair belonging to my father, and it was placed in my own library.

About this time I was being pressed by an official friend to attend a meeting at his house, for the purpose of taking part in a spirit rapping ceremony, but had always declined, because I did not believe in the phenomenon. However he particularly pressed me to come on account of my father's recent death, saying I should be certain to learn something. Perhaps my nerves had been worn by recent events. In any case I consented to come, and I remember wearing my father's watch chain and seal for the first time, to attune me to the atmosphere. I told no one at my house that I was going for this particular purpose. They thought I was simply going out to dinner in the ordinary way. My object in this silence was obvious. It was not to disturb the minds of those at home.

On arrival at my friend's house we had dinner and then adjourned to the drawing-room. The whole company sat round a largish table holding hands. Several members of the company described certain experiences and conducted conversations with spirit manifestations. But I was absolutely unmoved and looked upon the whole thing as unreal and made up. I left the house angry with myself for giving way to such nonsense.

Reaching home, not very late, I let myself in with my latch-key, and was immediately met by my wife, my mother and sisters having retired, who was strongly agitated and troubled. The explanation was that about ten o'clock she was working in the library as usual, and looking up from her seat she saw the form of my father seated in his usual way in his old chair. And ten o'clock was the time when I, an unbeliever in spirit manifestations, had been seated at the round table gathering of spirit believers. The coincidence is remarkable, and I have ever since been deeply impressed by it, but it has not made me a believer in spirit manifestations.

My remaining coincidences are of a much more ordinary character. The first case occurred in 1882, when I was reading Elton's 'Origins of English History.' On page 194 he describes from a printed collection the manorial customs of Taunton Deane in his own



county of Somersetshire. For my own studies I wanted to examine these customs. I sought for the book in vain at the British Museum, at the Law Society's Library, and at other libraries to which I had access. And at last I determined to appeal to Mr. Elton himself. At that time I did not know him well. He replied, pointing out the great value of the book, owing to it being printed locally for the use of the tenants of the manor and not for publication, and stated the probability of his copy being the only one in existence. Eventually he lent me the book on condition that I returned it within a week. It reached me one Monday morning, and in the evening I commenced to copy the entire book. It consisted of 132 and xxix pages of a small octavo, and its title was 'The Ancient Customs of the Manor of Taunton Deane; collected from the records of the Manor presented by the Jury at the Law Day Court, the twenty-fourth of April 1817, and published under their sanction. By H. B. Shillibeer, Land surveyor etc. Taunton, 1821.' I finished my copying for the night, a dozen pages or so, skipping the introduction of twenty-five pages. Among my letters on Tuesday morning was a catalogue from Hindley, the bookseller in the old Booksellers' Row in the Strand, and the first entry which caught my eye was Shillibeer's 'Customs of Taunton Deane' marked in the catalogue for three shillings and sixpence. Breakfast had no longer any interest for me, and I posted up to London and secured the copy, which still holds its place in my library. I have a note of one other copy in a Manchester catalogue at fifteen shillings, but have never met with another copy in a catalogue or in a library.

Always having been a student of manorial customs, I had sought for a copy of Elton's 'Tenures of Kent,' 1867, which had gone out of print, and I remember the joy with which I at last secured a copy in Chancery Lane, and was assured it was the last copy in the market. But another manorial experience is more curious. The London County Council had succeeded to the rights of the Lord of Manor of Tooting Bec in connection with the purchase of Tooting Bec Common as an open space for London by the Metropolitan Board of Works. The Court Rolls of the Manor and documents relating thereto passed into possession of the Council, and in 1900 the Council decided to commence the publication of its records with that portion of these manor rolls which terminated with the reign of Henry V. Examination of the rolls showed two gaps, one a portion of the reign of Edward IV., and a second the period between the years 1443 and 1447. While editing the

first volume for the Council, published in 1909, I had the good fortune to discover, in a second-hand catalogue, the missing rolls from 1443 and 1447, and the Council purchased them to include in the fine collection. My luck in coincidences had served me well in this instance. One other example comes from my collection of manorial books. 'Extracts from the Court Rolls of the Manor of Wimbledon extending from 1 Edward IV. to A.D. 1864' was published in 1866, and I picked up a second-hand copy. But there was a second volume published in 1869, consisting of 'extracts from miscellaneous MSS., some of them purporting to be customals and terriers,' and I sought for a copy of this volume for many years in vain. At last one of my coincidences occurred. I was on my way to visit friends at Wimbledon one Saturday afternoon, and in the Waterloo Road I secured a copy of this second volume, picked out of a 'twopenny box' of pamphlets and small books.

Coincidences from the library do not, however, limit themselves to one subject. Some years ago I was due to dine with a folklore friend at Twickenham, and at luncheon time, on the same day, I sauntered up Whitcomb Street to look at a second-hand book-stall, from which I had occasionally secured some bargains. On this occasion my luck did not desert me, for I purchased, for, I think, the modest twopence so dear to book hunters, four volumes of 'Times Telescope.' This was a sort of calendar published annually, from 1801 to 1821, describing itself as 'a complete guide to the almanack, containing an explanation of Saints' days and holidays, with illustrations of British history and antiquities, notices of obsolete rites and customs,' etc. This last feature was, of course, the centre of attraction to folklorists, and the information collected in these volumes is certainly curious and interesting, forming as they do forerunners to Hone's 'Year Book' and 'Every Day Book' and Chambers' 'Book of Days.' I did not feel equal to taking all four volumes with me to Twickenham and back again home, so I left three of the volumes at my office, and proceeded with my remaining treasure to my dinner appointment.

After dinner we were taking our coffee in my friend's library, and of course talking of the books on the shelves, and I incidentally mentioned that I had that very morning secured a find. Upon informing my friend that the find consisted of some volumes of 'Times Telescope,' one of which I had brought with me, he eagerly asked to see it, and we proceeded to the hall where my coat was hanging.

My friend took the volume from my hands, very hastily I remember, looked at the cover very narrowly, and then at the title-page, and proceeded with the volume in his possession<sup>d</sup> back to the library, where he promptly mounted the library steps and placed my volume in a vacant space on his shelves. It was the one volume he wanted to complete the series. The explanation was curious. He had collected all the volumes, but could not find a copy of this particular one. It had a curious misprint. The title-page showed the year to be 1812, but on the cover the figures had been transposed to 1821, and hence collectors had made mistakes over this volume time out of mind. The coincidence in this case was a double one. There was my purchase in the morning, and then my accidental selection of this volume to carry down to my friend's house in the evening. Of course I left the volume there.

Another such coincidence occurred on a visit to my old friend Edward Solly at Sutton, where he had built himself a library, which was full of rarities dear only to an enthusiastic bibliophile. Mr. Solly never came home from a journey to London without bringing a book with him as an addition to his treasures, and I well remember the joy of browsing in his magnificent library. Among other treasures, he had a great collection of Swift's works, first editions and the best of all the later editions. On the occasion of one of my visits to him, he showed me a copy of the first edition of 'Gulliver's Travels,' and then interested me by drawing attention to the book-plate and arms of a previous owner, 'James Gomme.' I told him of my relationship to this member of my family, my great-grandfather, and then he informed me that he only possessed two volumes of the three as published, and that he despaired of ever getting the third. I possessed that third volume, and had always mourned its lost fellows. Next day I sent my volume to Mr. Solly, thus adding a quite unusual example to my list of coincidences.

My next examples of coincidences, three in number, relate to the curiosities of research, and they are all three of a remarkable character. In writing my book on the 'Governance of London' (1907) I described the mode of land settlement outside London as compared with the mode inside London, and wrote as follows (pp. 162-163): 'One has only to consult old London maps to discover easily in various parts the acre strips of ancient arable lands which distinguished London before the building of the houses

and which determine the position and site of houses to this day.' I instanced the houses at Putney facing the river, for information as to which I was indebted to my friend Mr. Walter Rye, and then my discovery of a parallel case furnished by Park Lane, the line of frontage of which is so splendidly irregular. I had examined this irregularity very closely, and incurred the watchful attention of the police in so doing, and I concluded that it was due to the separate ownership of acre strips upon which owners built their modern property in succession to the ancient cultivating methods of Teutonic settlements. But I could find no proof of this conclusion, and my book was printed with the mere surmise. Almost immediately afterwards I discovered the needed proof from a map of the Ebury estate in the Crace collection, a 'mapp or plot of the Lordship of Eburie being situated in the parish of St. Martins in the Fields Mary Dammison being proprietess by Henry Morgan 1675.' This map showed the eastern side of Park Lane before it was built upon, and running parallel to Piccadilly, and therefore at right angles to Park Lane, are depicted the separate acre strips, with the names of the different owners marked on each strip. Proof of my unconfirmed conclusion was thus completed, and this coincidence of research was gleefully added to my memory of the other instances which have now been related in this paper.

The second example of a coincidence in research work is almost uncanny. I was at work upon my 'Making of London' (1912) and was behindhand with my proofs. On a Friday morning I received a special request from the publishers to send off the revised proof of a sheet not returned in its proper order. A difficulty had arisen. This part of the proof dealt with the relationship of the Tower of London to the city, and my story was incomplete without the evidence of the Tudor period. I could find nothing, and my morning's work of research ended fruitlessly. We expected a distinguished visitor immediately after luncheon, and I knew there would be no chance of my finishing the proof after his arrival. I was singularly vexed at my want of success, and suddenly I said to myself 'I can't get any information by ordinary means, I will try extraordinary.' I have no idea what led me to this decision. I was not in a credulous mood, but frankly annoyed with myself. Taking down a volume, selected by mere chance, of the folio edition of the 'Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission,' printed in double columns and containing some hundreds of pages, I stuck my paper-knife into the top of the volume, on the principle

of the old practice of *Sortes Virgilianae*, and turned to discover the results. On the right-hand page of the volume thus arrived at I found the record of a legal case drawn up by Lord Coke dealing with the very subject upon which I was interested. Such a coincidence is surely quite remarkable, even in a lifetime of literary research.

My last example is even more remarkable because it is more important in its results. I have been studying the tradition of London for some time, and am satisfied that I have made some important discoveries, which I hope soon to be in a position to publish. A fragment of this tradition was communicated to *The Athenæum* by a distinguished scholar, and it was important to the case I was developing, especially if I could trace it to a Celtic source. But I had no evidence of this. Now business took me to Cardiff shortly after my discovery of this fragment, and I was occupied there for some few days. On the Saturday before returning home I journeyed to Caerleon to see the Roman remains there, and thoroughly enjoyed my morning's visit. I wanted to go on to Caerwent to continue investigation there, and negotiated with the landlord of the inn to drive me over. While waiting for the trap being made ready, I talked to the landlady about the antiquities of Caerleon and asked whether there were any traditions of the place. She mentioned several quite well-known superstitions current in many parts of the country and believed in by the people of Caerleon, and then suddenly repeated almost word for word the fragment of London tradition in which I was so interested. The Caerleon people believed in and practised this London traditional rite definitely because it was a London rite, and the Celtic aspect of which I was in search was thereby established.

This short survey of coincidences in the experience of one person may be useful in more ways than one. Smaller occurrences have happened, but it did not seem worth while to note them. They seem to have produced a sort of feeling that my 'luck' was considerable, and accordingly I have thought it worth while to record them in the hope of discovering whether they have any value beyond that of interest for the curious.

# RAMBLER'S LICHEN.

BY SIR JAMES H. YOXALL, M.P.

WITH trunk, limbs, and branches of travel an English country highway lies on the land like the section or vertical slice of a tall felled tree; fringes of hedge its foliage and fields its clouds of air. Never straight-ruled on the map, no Roman cypress nor close, unerring poplar, it is rather some indigenous great beech or elm, that swayed to the winds with a not too ready yielding, and grew up in lines hardly gaunt enough to be angular yet too clean-run to be curves.

Rooted at Sherborne, say, one of these great arboriferous road-systems wends north by east, towards camps of the present and earthworks of the past. At a widening of bole it forks, pushing one arm out easterly and another south-westerly; such is the swayed posture here that you glimpse the dryad in it, as you do the Venus de Milo in some real tree-trunk that ivy swatches to the hip. The eastward limb, if you cleave to that, will become stem itself, and sway out curved arms of its own to woo you; take one of those rustling prongs for a mile or two and it bifurcates, so that soon, like the squirrel, you must choose your branch. From bough to bough you may leap (so to speak) by agile footpaths, but if you keep on along a lean lane that presently thins into a mere rut, you attain to the extremest twig. It is thus that afoot from Sherborne you reach to Sandford Orcas, say, or if your way-faring tree be rooted at Yeovil, to that extremity of path a fore-draught (to use the old Worcestershire name for an approach to a farm), which brings you to Barrington Court.

And all along your way there will have been bivouacs of blossoms, fruit, seed for the next blooming; or in every footprint of *Primavera* you may have seen the primrose lichening the banks, some morning still covered with dew. Pray do not remark that the primroses are primulaceous—it is the occulter analogies a true loiterer likes to ramble into—nor declare that lichens are parasites which stifle their billets: maybe, maybe. But they are gentle intruders anyhow, no Prussians in Belgium, and the householder lives long, on excellent terms with his guest. Lichens are dowerings; indeed, our own wrinkles might be glad of them—they prank and enrich; even the sad coloured ones do, and the black. 'These weeds are memories,' Lear said, and fair lichen of remembrance,



musings emotions of pity or relish, and dew of tears, even, may alight upon a Rambler as he goes his discursive, his essayist's way. Though he latterly gad at a slackening pace, and the extreme twig bring him, chief mourner for himself, at the head of a dark procession, to some short, shallow trench and clay cot, I think he will have been the happier and the longer-lived for his lichening; he may also have become wealthy meanwhile, in *memorabilia*, the thiefless hoard that never lessens; he may even have been hallowed somewhat, not left untouched at heart as the true ungodly, they whom neither the beauty of this world nor the dream of another can impassion, or the 'sense of tears in mortal things' soften inside. With a venial, reverent Pharisaism, therefore, that in truth is but gratitude, a Rambler may thank his wandering stars that *he* has been no man unlichenable, upon whom no charm of place, or quip of illusion, nor the *lacrymae rerum* gat hold.

Lovely are the swayed bodies of dryad and Venus trees in silvery April, before they have hung their leafy mantillas and aprons about them, as if shrinking from gaze. But beautiful as September sunshine is the lichen upon them too, itself a veil; so goodly to look at that county men quarrel across their small frontiers about it—I remember Sir William Harcourt saying at Malwood that whenever Mr. Gladstone and he met in the country they contended whether Hawarden or Malwood trees were lichen'd the better. Yet I think it is upon stone walls and roofs, in Dorset, say, that the fungi-algae look best of all. Pickthanks and esurient flatterers of trees they may be, perhaps, but like Danaë gold and silver they descend upon masonry, giving, not taking, and finely wrought as coins that were minted at Syracuse. With nothing of Sir Gorgius Midas in their profusion, they do not pretend to be county people, exclusive, and as soon will gild a hamlet gable as a mansion coat-of-arms. Like sunshine spattered through meshes of leaves they descend upon their billets, but to last there after sunset, and to endure through winter, like our men entrenched in Flanders. The lodging they prefer is stone, I say—a brown stone that empurples; they seldom select the wattle-and-daub of a washed, half-timbered wall.

Few dwellings of that architecture linger on in stone counties now, however—I mean the prototypal make, the human nest built of mud; masonry has almost everywhere ousted the caked stuff which Shakespeare so often saw 'stop a hole, to keep the wind away.' In Warwickshire, Wilts, and other river-bed counties a Rambler still happens upon this primal type of cottage sometimes; as



he does at Clifden Hampden, in the aged building called the 'Barley Mow' near Wallingford Bridge. He recognises the ancient cot, cote, hutch, hut, or whatever its earliest English name was, by the inwardly-slanting timbers of its ends, cloven tree-trunks, which lean up into the gables from the floor corners, in couples that meet as if to embrace, beneath the watershed of the roof. Two pairs of such tree-trunks, starting from right distances at the base, and tied together at the top by a ridge-tree, formed the skeleton of the prototypal house; perhaps in the earliest huts the four supports were living saplings, still growing in pairs at convenient spots, for these could be yoked into service—bent while still green, to be then beheaded; maybe our word 'roof-tree' began in that.

We think of the famous half-timbered house at Stratford-on-Avon as 'Elizabethan,' but Beowulf may have had some such a habitation as that: this primal type must be inconceivably aged;

'Old shepherd in your wattle cote,  
I think a thousand years are done  
Since first you took your pipe of oat'

is only feebly approximate in date. Even the Bronze Epoch knew the latticed hovel roofed with daub; perhaps the skin-clad builders took lesson by the swallow's bungalow, or the clay lining of the throstle's house. Or perhaps the prototypal hut was the tent made permanent, a wigwam expressed in woven withies and caked mud? It must have been general in Europe when Christ was born, for certain first-century tombstones, dug up in Alsace, resemble the primal home in shape, and show markings for timbers at the gables; most likely these were mimic copies of the dead man's earthly dwelling, meant to house his otherwise vagrant soul; this is lichen of the greyest morning, though Egyptian funerary chambers are older still. But it is lichen that lives on yet, for what is a modern mausoleum but a mansion for the dead? A family vault at Woking is as tribal as a patronymic; we are born thus lichened—the youngest are grey with these spores from the past.

Such surnames as Dabb, Dauber, Dobb, and Dobbin descend from early manipulators of viscous mud, I suppose, special craftsmen developed at the very beginning of 'division of labour,' and there is a certain French phrase for sturdiness—*bâti à chaux et à sable*—which must date as far back as the earliest mixing of lime and sand in with mud. 'Clay-dabber Dick,' a resented nickname for a brickmaker now, would begin as a proper cognomen in some loamy county, where clay could be used flat between the timberings,

in place of wattle plastered with mud. Tyler would name the artisan who posed ridge-tiles and pantiles, that Potter had moulded, and baked perhaps in Robinson Crusoe's outdoor way: Defoe, by the bye, was once 'secretary to a pantile works at Tilbury.' Such craft names as Mason and Quarrier would begin in stone counties first, very likely; but Thatcher is as proved an ancient as Dobster or Dobbin—his lichen is as old as any, I daresay. For dab and thatch must always have gone together, and still in Wilts and Bucks garden-walls made of dab are thatched lest they dissolve under rain. Ramblers along English road-trees see this straw-weaving go on yet, thank goodness, as it surely always will wherever people own taste as well as land. There are thatched churches extant; one at Markby in Lincolnshire, near loamy cliffs that wall out the sea. What warmth and simplicity of worship, under thatch!

Thatch ennobles—it can suggest the stately peruke; thatch is sporting—a covert-coat for a cottage; thatch shades its serge into such tints of khaki that it weaves the right 'British warm.' A thatcher can be an artist, as much as any Dick Tinto who paints; and I will also claim that Hedger and Ditcher are very ancient and skilled artisans. Thatch shapes into such slopes, too, it so canopies and rounds off gables, dormers, and porches, that for fitness and comeliness its motley is your hamlet's only wear. And as patentees in their advertisements do, I urge 'Reject all substitutes!' and against metal roofs in particular, corrugated iron that basely counterfeits pantiles, I launch the curse of the Rambler; for upon such hectic, crinkly awnings no lichen of loveliness ever gets hold. Let roof-tree and road-tree grow 'in beauty side by side,' as Mrs. Hemans' family did, say I, and the wig of the cottage be blonde.

Road-trees sprout hamlets, dwellings grouped in greenery as if they were clusters of acorns or hazel-nuts, and these often are ripe old places, turning brown as nuts and acorns do, and blest with beautiful baptisms, names that a Rambler reads upon slanting sign-posts or over rustical post-office doors. Many old place-names relate their own exegesis: I know a road that branches off at Headless Cross—the medieval picture and *chiaroscuro* of the past in that! One sees the Lollards in the foreground of it, dourly hewing a saint's head off the top of a stone shaft, the thatched village looking sleepily on.

For six undulant miles or so this road from Headless Cross goes dandling along to Tardebigg, through delightful Foxlydiate, and past the bald summit of Muskott's Way. 'Tardebigg,' more

recondite than 'Headless Cross,' I guess to have named the site of some manor-house or farmstead built so dawdlingly as never to have been finished—a bachelor or spinster bit of building that never made a home, and childless died into the inane. Or 'Tardbigg' may have named some hill of late-harvesting barley—there is always the delight of shies at the local truth for you, one can seldom be quite sure of a hit. Yet who was Muskott, that he should ever have owned a long strip of common-land which could never belong to any particular body? It is fudge; I do not believe there ever was such a Muskott—Onesimus, George, or Ebenezer as the case might be. I'll warrant that Muskott's Way was known as Muskets Way in days when Napoleon threatened invasion, for in days when Louis Napoleon's colonels threatened it, the Rifle Corps had their shooting-range up Muskott's Way. There magazine rifles are practised with at present, I do not doubt, and there in Wat Tyler's time bowmen would loose at the butts. The place is a palimpsest, of our successive preparations for war.

As for the christening of Foxlydiate, the road-tree sways gracefully down just there, and was not *hlidh* Early English for 'slope'? There are other lyds and lydiates. 'Foxlydiate' may have meant the meet of the hunters—there are kennels near it still; but I think the name was anciently 'Folks-lydiate,' the hill of the 'good folk' or fays, and it is a superstitious little village yet. No stretch of country road used to live without its myth or chimera (of subtle contour often), its fable, its dreaming escape from the actual; a myriad perennial annals, vouched for by the affidavits of the aged, some of them puerile but some grim, lichen our by-ways; there is hardly a great house but when you pass the park-palings of split oak something romantical will come to mind, or be told in your ear. Beginning gay-coloured, as lichens often do, these sometimes darken; thus the legend at Foxlydiate is sombre and nocturnal now. The road there hears an equipage sometimes, after sunset, and this was once a fairy vehicle, I'll warrant, perhaps a Cinderella's coach; but it has become a nightmare now—the terror of 'the Flying Hearse.' Elms in platoons and companies shadow the road there, and there the bat of superstition flits through the twilight of the spirit; be there in the mood, and you may think you hear wheels rush uphill; smack of whip, snort of nag, clink of swingle-bar are heard, but no correspondent forms are visible; and that is salutary, the tradition says, for whoso *sees* the Flying Hearse must die within the year. Many a time there I as a lad, driving home in the twilight, listened with the delight of half-

sceptical terror, but I doubt if people harken for that fatal omnibus now. Tilth and foison of ghost story, aged jest, and fine old tradition no longer flourish ; for towns and townsmen, spreading into the country—lichen of a sort—bring the long age of romantic rural faiths to an end.

Townsmen in Arcady are rarer of late, however. War-time depopulates the country roads. The motor-car (itself a flying hearse sometimes) is scarce there now. Solitary the Rambler jogs along, alone with himself, except for the flight of the mated thrush or other father bird on service of commissariat ; but in what ease of silence you may now pursue your errantry, and into what delight of the unexpected ! There are folk who think they ramble, yet go nose in map, by rule and rote of road ; but as well employ a guide and an alpenstock—to ramble is not to ken whither, and yet to home. There are plausible short-cuts that deceive you, I know, and branches of road-trees bring you to sudden corners, hedged-in dichotomies, curves and exfoliations that the Development Commissioners, most leisurely of Government Trustees, had not even so much as begun to think of improving away, some day, before the War. These may perplex you, or even be perilous with storming petrels ; but there are natural dug-outs, trenches with high green banks.

Often from such elbows as these a lane goes trooping off, like a truant from school. Dusky ways you come to, and bright ones, russet or green tunnels over-arched that make noontide a twilight, or jolly and titupping lanes that caper away from corner alehouses with merry, drunken staggers. Or you pass between roofless colonnades, stately cloisters with tree-trunks for mullions ; these are lanes that once were avenues, leading long ago to the gates and curtilage of some manor-house now razed. It is by ways such as these that you pass the minuter Auburns, deserted cottages which by the something maniac there is now about their thatch make you think of Barnaby Rudge. And sometimes the raven croaks above those ruined little atriums ; oftener the curlew calls across lesser lanes still, that were ancient pack-horse tracks, or were foot-worn in the lang syne of some local trade now dead—the Salt-way, the Rush-way, or the Keg-way leading up from some cove of contraband. The ring-dove coos to narrower paths still—O Lubin and Chloe !—the recognised sweethearting footways where every generation has loitered and whispered with the erratic ache of love.

These divers cuts and tacks shorten apparent distance and cheat

the tiring foot, for the way itself seems to wander with you, and each new corner to beckon you on. And this is a portion of that English form of great art which lets things develop as if they were vegetal, into a perfect beauty of anarchy, various and infinite; no Ordnance surveyor nor planner of garden cities would invent such foot-beguiling roads as these. Some of them can astound even the most experienced Rambler, he almost can hear them chuckle at his surprise when he rounds into a new vista, and some of them seem to go about with the zeal of an antiquary, discovering and re-connecting the tracks of some Titan who traped through the quag there, before it had hardened after Noah's flood. There are leafy labyrinths, too, mazy suburbs, *faubourgs* of silent green cities, peopled by plants and shapes of leaves and scents so various, that in June, the schoolboy month, a man may rest there bewitched, 'Tarrying and talked to by tongues aromatic,' thinking himself a bodily translation, resolved into a forested world.

I suppose the skin-clad explorer of spaces we now name counties found no paths but the spoor of what a Boy Scout called 'growly beasts.' Between dens and water-breaks these tracks would go, and I never came to a ford without seeming to see some skin-clad explorer there before me, his tongue lapping water and his furtive eyes swivelling left and right for danger, since it was then always war-time for a man. In September, when great fleets of swallows gather in ports of departure, I have noticed them, myriad and midge-like in the air above and around—I cannot guess why—a ford. Water brings back some of the old feeling of mystery and danger into any journey, you spy the peril under the beauty as you come to a ferry, or to a string of white posts and chains that fence off a roadside burn.

How Shakespeare delighted in fords! He played with the word's meaning again and again. Many a Warwickshire place he knew where 'the shore was shelvy and shallow,' and he—perhaps he most of all as most human of all—would be glad to get home to his shire. There was, and I hope is yet, a ford at the 'beggarly Broome' which he knew of, where the road pushed into the Avon abruptly, turned at a right angle midstream, splashed axle-deep thirty yards, and emerged uphill. And this used to be a place of delicious risk for a young palmer whose staff was a whip; for at any moment the gig might become a cockleshell, floating. It was a sacred water of danger to me; may Development Commissioners destroy it never, and least of all with some iron bridge, kept painted against the mollifying lichen of rust.

Splash went the fetlocks ; or if you were afoot, under the lee of an old mill a lichened old boat swayed hooked, and across the echoing flow your cry went, ' Ferry-oh ! ' or ' O-ver, miller ! '—the very music of life. A ferry-boat is but a moving span, stepping-stones are a kind of ford, and bridges developed out of these, I think, for what were the piers at first but stepping-stones for a giant's stride ? Bridges—but pages and pages would not tell the Rambler's delight in those circumflex accents, those brooding brows bent over grey eyes of water wherein reflections lie deep, like thoughts that dream.

Such, Jean-Paul might have cried, in one of the conceits with which he rejoiced a dead old Germany, are the flowers and honey of a road-tree, with cottages like strawy hives, under linden-tresses murmurous of clustered delight ; these be the joys that wing the Rambler, so that away he goes bumbling tirelessly, as I do here, to the next blossoms, and the next. Life itself climbs and descends a road-tree, I suppose—the tree of Ygdrasil ; but there can be continual breaking forth into new boughs of living if one carries Spring on into Autumn, keeping pretty young in spite of the impertinences of time. Has there not been grafting of road-trees, budding of fertile young stems into lichened old branches of ways ?

But road-trees are deciduous, too, boughs and twigs of them withering for lack of the sap of daily use ; with some sense of pathos a Rambler obtrudes upon the hush of lanes long left unmetalled, where the latest wheel-marks are wan. He thus comes into places of pastoral indolence that once hummed with cultivation, where not even yet, in war-time, have farmers wakened their Sleepy Hollows up. Some of the elderliest by-roads are the loneliest, and seem to lie musing of their past ; even a summer breeze can blow bleakly there, and in the lulls of it the silence waits, forlorn. There are very aged, lonesome ways which seem to shiver, Lear-like, and then the Rambler thinks how all the hurriers and loiterers upon them in the past lie low. We too are in the tradition : ' This great world itself shall so wear out to naught.'

Lear wandered the Roman roads of Britain ; they set one thinking of strategic railways just now. In essence an old Latin militant broadway and a German route to the extravasation of blood are the same, I suppose. Both were pushed out like spears of offence, immense and excessive, and neither was a pleasant causeway for neighbourliness. Therefore a curse shall come upon the Prussian strategic paths, such as fell upon the Roman thoroughfares here long ago. Even yet these seem to march in arms among us, between



the remains of sullen native forests—they are aliens still ; listen along one of them yet, and you shall think you hear the clink of greaves or the centurion's harsh command. These ancient roads can never be homely, they have never been naturalised, the little townships hold apart from them yet.

Follow Watling Street or the Fosse Way in rustic regions and you come upon few villages : our old horror of the Latin power seems to persist. British and Early-English field-folk huddled together in hamlets that developed like social islands, at the centre of cultivable common lands, connubial, away from forests of *ferae* and thoroughfares of war. Even in York and Lancaster days villagers would use the great old roads as seldom as might be—they were marches for soldiery, stretches of savagery that husbandman and maid had better avoid. They thus became bristling frontiers, limits of peaceable excursion, confines of wapentakes or counties ; in days when people were

‘Parish-bound with hedgerows as with bars,’

it would be risky to quit your township, and almost armed invasion to cross the great road. We English no more became Latin than Teutonic later ; always we have gone our own ways. Between Newark and Nottingham the Fosse marches straight, a noble Roman superb and haughty, but the other road, the true Englishman, wends devious and unsystematic : it developed as the British Empire did, out of paths and lanes of trade and gossip : they never set out to be a main road or an empire at all.

Somewhere and sometime all roads end, as must this wandering gossip of road-trees. It is good to jog on the footpath way and hent the stile even in war-time ; when skylarks are mounted, why not out and listen, though from the same Sussex hill you faintly hear the great guns ? The lyric blaze above persists, in spite of war. Is it unfeeling to forget the drumming streets, the drilling camps, and go listen how underwoods ring with wild hyacinths ? That Death is Life's fierce, Prussian neighbour we know more than ever, just now—but Life *has* to be Death's comrade in the whirling dream. The war will pass, though thick the lichen of it gather upon us meanwhile, sad-coloured and black. It is not heartless to look round the corner and over the hill meantime, and it is wisdom to lift up the heart in spite of all, as one plods towards the evening tent.



## MONSEIGNEUR.

(Suggested by a Provençal conte of Alphonse Daudet's.)

(The scene is a bedchamber in MONSEIGNEUR's palace in Provence, and the time is a morning in early spring, towards the close of the fifteenth century.)

Behind the closely-drawn, heavily-embroidered curtains of his vast state-bed, lies the little MONSEIGNEUR, most desperately ill. Notwithstanding the gay and brilliant sunshine that floods the palace, in the open fireplace of MONSEIGNEUR's bedchamber there is a blazing scented fire of logs piled; while all the windows, with their stained armorial bearings, and all the heavy tapestry hangings over the narrow doorways that lead to garde-robe and oratory and corridor, are mercilessly closed. One would say, indeed, that the Doctor and Nurse who are in attendance were bent on killing the child, if only by depriving him of the faintest flutter of the revivifying spring air without. Yet they fully believe they are doing the best for their patient, and now are giving him the drink he cries for, faintly and fretfully, from within the tightly-drawn bed-curtains, putting the cup into the thin little hand that closes on it so feverishly.

Then the heavy hangings at the back are drawn, rattling sharply on their iron rings, and the Bishop of Langres enters. Behind him, in the blazing sunshine of the corridor, BEPPO waits for permission to follow him; a ragged, sunburnt, Spanish-looking little boy, who carries a bird's-nest with young thrushes in it, over which, as he stands there motionless, he seems entirely absorbed.)

BISHOP (as he enters). Mother of God! The heat in this chamber!—Doctor Mabrise! (at which the Doctor merely shrugs his shoulders, as if to say: 'What else can one do? In cases of fever!—') But out of doors, my good Doctor, it is spring; the sun is hot enough already to split the stones. Is it really necessary?

DOCTOR (severely). Of course!

BISHOP (in a low tone). Tell me—how is the boy?

DOCTOR (gloomily). Very bad.

BISHOP. So?

DOCTOR. Passing rapidly, even beyond my skill! (So he goes to the fire, and stirs it ill-humouredly to an even more furious activity.)

BISHOP. Already ? (*Murmurs.*) Then we must make haste. (*Meanwhile the Nurse, as a hot little hand returns the drinking cup through the bed-curtains, softly asks :*)

NURSE. Is that better ? (*To which the sick child within makes inarticulate, fretful reply. So she closes the curtains again tightly.*) Try now to go to sleep again, and you will wake up quite well. (*Soothingly.*) Quite well !

(*Then, with a profound obeisance to the Bishop, she goes to the table at the foot of the bed and replaces the cup among the many, many medicine bottles and phials of drugs ; while outside, in the sunshine of the corridor, BEPPO chants tunefully and joyously over his birds'-nest.*)

BEPPO. Mon-seig-neur !

(*He looks up startled as both Nurse and Doctor make angry, violent gestures towards him of 'Ssh ! 'Ssh !', and then at his good friend, the Bishop, wondering what wrong it is he has done. A slight pause, while no sound comes from the bed. Then the Nurse goes up to him, beckoning him angrily, and once he is within the chamber draws the heavy hangings again over the corridor entrance.*)

NURSE (*in an angry whisper*). Bawling and singing, like a drunken gipsy !

BEPPO (*faces her with an engaging smile*). Mind my pretty nestlings. (*And chants over them, softly and melodiously.*) They are for Mon-seig-neur !

NURSE (*in his face, sharply*). 'Ssh ! Vagabond !

BEPPO (*while the Nurse goes to the bed and peeps through the curtains, chants again very softly over his birds'-nest.*) For Mon-seig-neur !

NURSE (*turns towards them and whispers*). He is just off again. Fast asleep. (*So she sits and resumes her sewing at the foot of the bed, while the Bishop also glances through the curtains, and BEPPO, always absorbed over the birds'-nest, goes to show it to the Doctor.*)

BISHOP (*with a heavy sigh*). The last of his race ! It would have killed his father. (*Pause.*)

BEPPO. Doctor Mabrise ! Look !

DOCTOR. What are they ?

BEPPO. Young thrushes. I found them this morning, in a great lilac-bush, below the Black Dog bastion. See ! There are five, DOCTOR (*gloomily*). They will die.

BEPPO. In this hot chamber ? Ah ! Before Monseigneur can even see them ? *Malheur !*

(*As if at once to take them into the open air.*)

BISHOP. Beppo! (*BEPPPO pauses and looks up at him with a smile.*) My poor boy! Thou art seeming very ragged and dirty this morning.

BEPPPO. Truly? (*As he looks himself over.*)

BISHOP. If thou art to play once more with Monseigneur, we must have thee washed.

BEPPPO (*troubled*). Washed?

BISHOP. It will not hurt thee; it may even do thee some good. Nurse! Take our young friend here and wash him. Wash him well!

NURSE (*pleased with the commission, rises*). Ah!

BEPPPO. Not with soap?

NURSE (*menacingly*). With soap and with pumice-stone. Come!

BISHOP. Leave me thy birds'-nest. And, Nurse, let him at the same time be neatly dressed. Perhaps in some old suit of Monseigneur's.

BEPPPO (*annoyed*). Old suit?

BISHOP. They are of the same age and height. And to play with Monseigneur in those rags!—(*As BEPPPO still lingers.*) Go, my child.

NURSE. Come! I will give thee the best washing!—

BEPPPO (*with recovered spirits*). I am not afraid. Thou art only an old woman!

NURSE. Ah! Sayest thou?

BEPPPO (*whispers, shaking a finger in her face*). 'Ssh, old woman! 'Ssh! (*So they leave the chamber, the Nurse angrily pushing him out in front of her.*)

BISHOP (*tenderly, over BEPPPO's birds'-nest*). Little, hungry, weak birds! There is something infinitely pathetic, Doctor, in these young things of Nature.

DOCTOR (*gloomily*). So many of them die.

BISHOP. It seems so; even without the aid of a surgeon. (*He hands the Doctor the nest, who, not knowing what else to do with it, nor how to reply to the Bishop's impertinence, places it on the ledge of the high and sloping couvre-feu over the fireplace.*)

DOCTOR. There! The heat will do them good; nourish them. For heat is life. *Calor est vita optima.* (*Mumbling and muttering to himself.*) Galen hath said it.—Galen!—

BISHOP (*after a long pause, softly*). Doctor Mabrise—tell me—is there no way, no hope, of keeping Monseigneur alive?

DOCTOR (*warming his thin brown hands in front of the fire*).

My science knows none ; she is at her wits' end. And when science is at her wits' end——

BISHOP (*drily*). Methinks she hath but a short road to travel !

DOCTOR (*piqued*). Then let the Church try, my good Bishop ; let the Church try. For if ever there were need for one of your miracles——

BISHOP (*gravely*). Ah !

DOCTOR (*points to the bed*). There is your subject, ready for you ; waiting. A dying child. You have my authority to begin.

BISHOP (*drily*). Then we will begin by opening the windows ; we will admit some of this soft spring air. (*He unlatches and throws wide open one of the few windows of the bedchamber ; while the Doctor, himself a poor consumptive, shivers and cowers over the fire.*) You don't like it ?

DOCTOR (*angrily*). Seeing that all diseases enter by the mouth !

BISHOP (*amused*). What ? In springtime ? In Provence ?

DOCTOR (*grumbles*). Especially in springtime. Always ! (*Mumbling, with cloak drawn over his mouth.*) Plague and fever !

BISHOP. At any rate, Doctor, you will agree with me that if Monseigneur dies it means ruin for the Duchy.

DOCTOR (*scornfully*). If ?

BISHOP. There will infallibly be civil war here all through the summer. There will be neither harvest nor vintage !

DOCTOR (*shortly*). I agree.

BISHOP. And in the autumn, here, in the very palace of Monseigneur, will most surely be found securely seated that dangerous ruffian, the Comte de Poix. An infidel ; a pronounced foe to Holy Church ! While you and I, my good friend——

DOCTOR (*drily*). All the more reason, Bishop, for you to set to work at once with your miracle. You have my full permission——*plena auctoritas*——to begin.

BISHOP (*with a glance at the bed*). After all, Beppo is Monseigneur's brother. You knew that, Doctor ?

DOCTOR. Doubtless. What of it ?

BISHOP. Beppo and he are of precisely the same age. They are not unlike—at a distance. And at a distance, for some few years, it will be that the people will always see him.

DOCTOR (*scoffs*). You don't call that a miracle ? To substitute one boy for the other ?

BISHOP (*gently*). Not if it succeeds ?

DOCTOR. Bishop ! And Beppo ? What will the people think has become of Beppo ?

BISHOP. Only that he has run away again somewhere, and got lost.

DOCTOR. Lost !

BISHOP. Why, who is there ever gives him a moment's thought here ? Is he not a gipsy—a vagabond ?

DOCTOR. And you propose to place him—in a palace ?

BISHOP (*whispers*). 'Ssh ! Monseigneur is waking. (*Goes to the bed and draws the curtains.*) But how is this, Doctor ? The boy is not undressed ?

DOCTOR. He refused. He said that if he had to die he would die as his father did, in his clothes.

BISHOP. Brave lad ! (*So he seats himself on the edge of the bed, outside of which the little MONSEIGNEUR lies, fully dressed, propped up by pillows. And after a while, as the Bishop leans forward and gently places his large peasant's hand on the poor child's small and scorching palm, MONSEIGNEUR turns towards him, feebly and languidly, and looks at him with wide-open, frightened eyes. Soothingly.*) Well, Monseigneur ? And how are we ?

MONSEIGNEUR (*murmurs*). Bishop of Langres ! Tell me—am I really going to die ?

BISHOP (*gently*). To die ! After all, what is it to die ? It is only to go from one room to another. And to another, better !

MONSEIGNEUR (*fretfully*). I would rather stay here. Here are all my friends, and my soldiers, and my new cannon. Besides, to die in spring ! So early in the year, when there is so much to do ; when my people want me. (*Raising himself slightly.*) Where is Beppo ?

BISHOP. He will be here directly. He is only being washed.

MONSEIGNEUR (*smiles faintly*). Poor Beppo ! That is not one of his favourite amusements.

BISHOP. You are fond of Beppo ? Is it not so, Monseigneur ?

MONSEIGNEUR. Very fond.

BISHOP. You would like to do something for him ? How shall I say ? Assure his future ? (*On MONSEIGNEUR's silence.*) You understand what I mean, by assuring Beppo's future ?

MONSEIGNEUR. Of course ! It means seeing that he has always somewhere to sleep, that he does not go so often hungry, and, in the winter, fireless ; that he keeps himself clean. The

difficulty will be to make him accept. (*Smiles.*) He is such a vagabond.

BISHOP. Hitherto, no one has shown him any care.

MONSEIGNEUR. And yet—he is my brother.

BISHOP (*while the Doctor, who is listening, starts.*) Monseigneur! You knew? But how? Since when?

MONSEIGNEUR. Since one day—a long time ago—when I was quite a child, and my father and my mother were quarrelling.

BISHOP. So?

MONSEIGNEUR. It seems, Messire, that when people quarrel—even before their own children—they will tell each other unpleasant truths.

BISHOP (*nods, gravely*). Sometimes.

MONSEIGNEUR. So it was that my mother told my father he ought to be ashamed of himself. He had so many little bastards.

BISHOP (*shocked, with raised hands*). Monseigneur!

MONSEIGNEUR. I did not understand. I had never heard the word. Therefore, one day I asked Lorrain, the big man-at-arms—  
(*Pauses.*)

BISHOP. And he told your lordship?

MONSEIGNEUR. He told me nothing. He only laughed. So did my father, when my mother charged him.—Aie! how well I remember!

BISHOP. But *Madame la Duchesse*, your mother? She did not laugh?

MONSEIGNEUR (*simply*). Not at all. She was very angry. She said it was a scandal; particularly, with poor Beppo. Do you know why, Bishop? (*Confidentially.*) Because it seems he was born on the same day, the very same day, as I. Yet, somehow, she was not his mother. That was why she was so angry, I suppose?

BISHOP. Very likely. (*Pause, while the Doctor, after exchanging glances with the Bishop, resumes his seat by the fire.*)

MONSEIGNEUR. Bishop!

BISHOP. Monseigneur?

MONSEIGNEUR. Do you think that if I gave my brother Beppo money—a great deal of money—he would die instead of me? Do you think the good God would mind?

BISHOP (*guardedly*). It would be difficult.

MONSEIGNEUR (*proudly*). After all, the good God is my cousin. Dukes are all cousins of the Almighty God, Bishop. Are they not?

BISHOP. They very often make the claim, Monseigneur. I do not know whether it has ever been allowed.

MONSEIGNEUR (*with dignity*). At least, Messire, I trust that in heaven I shall keep my proper rank? I shall not be required to mix with all the common people?

BISHOP. Common people, Monseigneur? It is not the common people, believe me, who rise to heaven at all. Indeed, one must have uncommon qualities!—

MONSEIGNEUR (*eagerly*). And then my fine clothes; my ermine and my velvet? Doubtless I shall be allowed to wear them?

BISHOP. Alas, my child, in heaven there are no distinctions; neither of rank nor of clothes. Sometimes I doubt whether even the sacred order of Bishops—

MONSEIGNEUR (*angrily*). Then what good to me is my birth? If I am to keep neither my rank nor my clothes, if I am not to be treated with proper respect, I might as well be Beppo! I will not die! I will not! I will not!

BISHOP. Monseigneur!

MONSEIGNEUR (*leaning on his elbow, screams*.) Lorrain! Lorrain! (*And while the Bishop rises, LORRAIN, the big man-at-arms, comes clanking in through the hangings from the corridor.*)

LORRAIN (*hoarsely*). Monseigneur?

MONSEIGNEUR. Lorrain—listen! I have a duty for thee—at once!—a solemn duty!

LORRAIN. Name it, Monseigneur. It shall be done.

MONSEIGNEUR (*feverishly*). Lorrain—thou knowest Death, dost thou not? Thou hast often seen him?

LORRAIN. Death and I have often looked at each other, Monseigneur—many times!—straight in the eyes. I know him well.

MONSEIGNEUR. Good! Then take thy comrades, Lorrain—forty, fifty of thy stoutest men-at-arms—my Lansquenets! Post them at every door of this my palace; and if Death tries to enter, tell them to fire on him and kill him. My strictest orders!

LORRAIN. Monseigneur, it shall be done. He shall not enter. We ourselves will die first. (*Salutes and is going.*)

MONSEIGNEUR (*faintly, as he lies back*.) And, Lorrain—

LORRAIN. Monseigneur?

MONSEIGNEUR. Fill the courtyard with cannon. Our new cannon. The villain might come on horseback—and try to storm—the great staircase.

LORRAIN (*gravely*). Monseigneur, before Death enters the



palace precincts, either on horseback or on foot, we will fire all the *grosses pièces* on him and blow him back to hell. It shall be done! (*Whereupon MONSEIGNEUR, lying back on the pillows with closed eyes, makes a feeble little gesture of dismissal, and LORRAIN salutes and disappears. From outside in the corridor is heard the clank of armour; then LORRAIN's hoarse voice 'En avant, la garde! Mar-r-chez!'*—while the Bishop returns to the bedside.)

BISHOP (*whispers.*) Doctor! (*As the Doctor joins him and feels the child's pulse.*) How much longer?

DOCTOR. *Moriturus!*—Perhaps an hour.

BISHOP. Ah!

DOCTOR. If your miracle is to succeed!—

BISHOP. Beppo is coming. Let us leave them alone together. Come, Doctor, come.

DOCTOR. And the miracle? The famous miracle!

BISHOP. We shall see. Only give them time. Come.

DOCTOR (*with a scornful shrug*). Time?

(*So they go out into the corridor, and after a pause BEPPO enters, washed and combed, smartly dressed in one of Monseigneur's discarded suits, out of which he seems indeed to swell, it being somewhat too small for him, with pride and satisfaction. For it is the first time in all his life that he has worn anything but rags; and for the first time, also, he looks like what in fact he is, MONSEIGNEUR's brother.*)

BEPPO (*as he swaggers gaily in.*) Monseigneur enters! Monseigneur salutes with condescension the gay and gallant company assembled to welcome him! Monseigneur turns to the Court Physician, and in haughty tones—*Tiens!* Where is the Court Physician? Doctor Mabrise? Where the plague have they put my birds'-nest? (*Screams.*) Mabrise!—You old fool! (*Then he sees the nest on the ledge of the couvre-feu.*) Ah! So near the fire? (*He jumps up on the footstool and takes the nest, while MONSEIGNEUR gradually recovers, and, raising himself on the pillows, watches him.*) Dead! Every one of them dead! (*As he jumps off the footstool.*) The wretch has killed my thrushes! My sweet, beautiful, living thrushes! *Ah, ça!* (*As he draws his dagger*) Mabrise! Mabrise! (*and runs towards the corridor.*)

MONSEIGNEUR. Beppo!

BEPPO. But he has killed my thrushes; the thrushes I brought thee! Look!

MONSEIGNEUR (*as he takes the nest*). So much the better. They will be all ready for me to play with—in heaven.

BEPP0 (*crying with rage*). I did not bring them for thee to play with in heaven ; but here, with me.

MONSEIGNEUR. Perhaps they have only swooned, as I did just now. Take them, Beppo, place them in the sunshine, by the window. It is very likely they will recover.

BEPP0 (*whimpering*). Nay, I know they are dead. But, by Heaven, they shall be revenged !

MONSEIGNEUR. Beppo !

BEPP0 (*as he places the nest in the sun on the window-ledge*). I will lie in wait for their murderer ; and one night when he is crawling about the streets—like an old cat in the dusk, as I have so often seen him—I will creep up behind, and I will stab him in the back.

MONSEIGNEUR (*struggling to rise*). In the back ? Beppo ! Dost thou think that the action of a knight ?

BEPP0. I am not a knight, but, like my mother, a gipsy, and I will stab him where I can.

MONSEIGNEUR (*feebly, on the edge of the bed*). Help me. Help me to the chair.

BEPP0 (*as he helps him down off the bed, and into the Nurse's chair*). One—two—three ! So ! (*Laughing*.) Why, one would say thou wert drunk !

MONSEIGNEUR (*with a wan little smile*). Nay, Beppo ! (*and lies back in the chair with closed eyes*.)

BEPP0. Ah ! Listen !

MONSEIGNEUR (*languidly*). Well ?

BEPP0. In the courtyard ! (*Running to the open window, he looks out*.) Philippe ! Cannon ! The courtyard is full of cannon.

MONSEIGNEUR. I know. I ordered it.

BEPP0. But is there some attack ? The Comte de Poix ? Already ?

MONSEIGNEUR. One never knows. The times are troublous.

BEPP0. But who will lead them, if thou art so ill ?

MONSEIGNEUR (*smiles*). Why not thou ? My brother ?

BEPP0 (*radiant*). To battle ? Philippe !

MONSEIGNEUR. Sit, Beppo, and I will give thee charge. Sit at my feet here, like a scholar, and I will teach thee.

BEPP0. Monseigneur Philippe ! (*And looks up at him, breathless with interest, admiration, and attention*.) Go on now ; teach me ! I am ready.

MONSEIGNEUR (*gently*). Thou knowest thou art my brother ?  
(*As BEPPO nods.*) Who has told thee ?

BEPPO (*laughs*). Everyone.

MONSEIGNEUR. Not in scorn ?

BEPPO. Nay ! They know better.

MONSEIGNEUR. My mother was a wronged lady, Beppo.

BEPPO. So was mine. Yet she never complained. She was too proud.

MONSEIGNEUR. Where is she now ?

BEPPO. She is dead.

MONSEIGNEUR. Ah ?

BEPPO. They killed her.

MONSEIGNEUR. Killed her ?

BEPPO. The tribe. They said she had disgraced them. She was a princess.

MONSEIGNEUR. Then thou art indeed alone in the world, Beppo ; for thy father, thy father and mine, is dead, too.

BEPPO (*stoutly*). I think it is a good thing to be alone in the world. One is all the stronger.

MONSEIGNEUR. To be hungry ? Homeless ? Friendless ? Is that to be stronger ?

BEPPO. It seems so. Am not I stronger than thou ?

MONSEIGNEUR (*sighs*). Indeed !

BEPPO (*patronisingly*). If only they had let thee alone, Philippe ; sent thee out hungry to play in the fields, sometimes to sleep there ; kept thee away from that foolish book-learning ; thou would'st not be so weak and languid. So childish ! Thou would'st be strong like me. Strong as a mule !

MONSEIGNEUR (*tearfully*). Thou art a knave to say I am childish—a knave !—and when I am well again——

BEPPO (*boastfully*). See, Philippe, how strong I am, and how active. See how I can jump ! (*As he jumps on to the settle by the fireplace, and vaults over the back.*) Hold, there ! Hold ! And I can dance—and run—and swim !

MONSEIGNEUR (*feebly and vindictively, drawing his dagger*). If I could only reach thee—with my dagger !

BEPPO. And I can fight, too ! (*Laughing.*) Why, thou dost not even hold thy weapon rightly. See, Philippe, it is so !—the point upwards ! Not so ! That is how women fight, with bodkins. This is how men fight. (*Stabbing at an imaginary foe.*) Ha ! Thou rapsallion ! Thou mountebank ! I will show thee !

MONSEIGNEUR. Beppo !

BEPPLO. Let me but reach thee, thou coward ! I will split thee !

MONSEIGNEUR (*screams*). Beppo! Beppo! (*As the Bishop hurries in from the corridor.*)

BISHOP. Children! Children! Quarrelling? With daggers drawn? (*Severely.*) Beppo?

BEPPO (*rather alarmed, explains*). I was only just showing him—  
(*Together.*)

MONSIEUR (*crying with rage*). } He was teasing me!—teasing  
me.

BISHOP (*angrily*). Beppo !

BEPPO. I will not do it again. It was only to amuse him.

BISHOP (*aside, as he takes BEPPO by the ear*). Senseless ! Dost not know he is dying ?

BEPPPO (*startled*). Dying?

BISHOP. Tease him no more, Beppo. Go ; make friends with him ; comfort him.

BEPP0 (*distressed*). Dying? Oh, my Philippe! (*So he goes and throws himself on his knees before MONSIEUR, huddled up, crying, in the Nurse's chair.*)

BISHOP. I shall be here, within earshot, in the oratory. And if I so much as hear thee!— Remember! (*And disappears through the hangings into the oratory.*)

BEPP0 (*gently*). Give me thy dagger, Philippe; let us be friends again. So! (*as he throws the daggers on the bed.*) And if thou wilt, I will cure thee. (*Winningly.*) Shall I, Philippe?

MONSIEUR (*feebly*). When I am well again, brute, I will knock thy head.

BEPPŌ (*soothingly*). Thou shalt! Thou shalt! (*as he puts his head on MONSEIGNEUR's lap.*) Knock it now, if it pleases thee. (*MONSEIGNEUR gives him a feeble, vindictive little slap.*) There! Is that better? Do it again. (*MONSEIGNEUR pushes him fretfully away.*) And now I will cure thee; make thee one day as strong as I. Only thou must obey me. Art ready—to obey me? Thou art still crying, Philippe? Nay, but why?

MONSIEUR. To think how I leave my poor Duchy! Defenceless! Ah, if only thou wert my true brother!—if only there were not the bar!

BEPP0 (*laughs*). Why, then I might one day be duke. A droll duke ; one that would need a deal of washing. Nay, I would not

be duke, to be washed every day. (*Gravely.*) But if duke I ever were—there are things I should know. (*With a wise nod.*) Ah!

MONSEIGNEUR. What things?

BEPP0. About the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the old. It does not matter so much for me; I am young and can bear it, But the old!—To be old is dreadful; but to be old and hungry, in autumn without a roof, without a fire in winter! If I were duke, Philippe, dost thou know what I would do? (*As MONSEIGNEUR, lying back in the chair, feebly shakes his head.*) In winter I would have all the old people here to live with me in the palace; feed them, and keep them warm.

MONSEIGNEUR. Ah? And in summer?

BEPP0. They should come here, too, and rest all day in the shade of the corridors, to keep them cool. And I would go about among them and fulfil all their wants, and make them laugh with my antics and gay stories. Not pity them! The poor do not like to be pitied.

MONSEIGNEUR (*wearily*). Thou art very ignorant, Beppo.

BEPP0. It is possible. Yet there are things I know one cannot learn from books. And of book-learning, Philippe, it seems to me that thou hast had too much.

MONSEIGNEUR. How can one have too much, if one is one day to be duke?

BEPP0 (*laughs*). Nay!

MONSEIGNEUR. Call me the Bishop, Beppo.

BEPP0 (*troubled*). The Bishop? But why?

MONSEIGNEUR (*fretfully*). Call him. (*So BEPP0 rises, grumbling and muttering, and goes to the oratory doorway.*)

BEPP0 (*shouts ill-humouredly through the hangings*). Bishop of Langres!

BISHOP (*as he enters*). Monseigneur?

(*While BEPP0 seizes the opportunity to steal away from them on tiptoe back to the open window and his birds'-nest. He almost screams with rapture to find that in the fresh air and broad, genial sunshine the nestlings are recovering, faintly stirring, ravenously opening their soft yellow beaks for food. Over them he is soon absorbed, touching them here and there and singing to them one of his many tuneful peasant songs.*)

MONSEIGNEUR. Bishop of Langres—I have a charge for thee, a sacred charge.—Beppo, my brother.

BISHOP. Monseigneur?

MONSEIGNEUR. Let him be taught. Only see to it, Bishop, that they do not try to teach him too much. Weary him not with lessons, as they have so often wearied me.

BISHOP. And what would Monseigneur have him? A priest?

MONSEIGNEUR. I would have him a soldier and a gentleman; a leader of men. Bad times are ahead of us, Bishop, and it is possible—that one day—(*he pauses, and then calls.*) Beppo! (*But BEPPO is too absorbed to hear him.*)

BISHOP (*angrily*). Beppo! (*And BEPPO turns, startled, and on the Bishop's gesture drags himself down to them unwillingly.*)

MONSEIGNEUR. Beppo, I have determined to—— (*He pauses; then, puzzled, to the Bishop.*) What was it?

BISHOP. Assure his future.

MONSEIGNEUR. Yea, assure thy future. Thou shalt be taught to read (*at which BEPPO shifts his feet uneasily*)—and, if God will, some day to write. Thou shalt learn history, statecraft, poetry; to dance, to ride.

BEPPO (*defiantly*). I can do both already, to perfection.

MONSEIGNEUR (*fretfully*). To perfection!—when I myself have seen thee, lumping about like a servitor. Best of all, thou shall be taught courtly behaviour; to consider others; to be just and merciful, to speak the truth.

BEPPO (*shiftily*). I never lie.

MONSEIGNEUR. I hope not, but I do not altogether believe it. Even I have lied—I!—who have been taught so much.

BEPPO (*mutters*). There are certain things I do not call lies.

MONSEIGNEUR. Thou seest, Bishop, how ignorant he is? Take him, Messire, and teach him, and one day—doubtless—he will be all I might have been——

BISHOP. Monseigneur!

MONSEIGNEUR. If only they had not killed me, by teaching me so much. So many lessons; so little play! Promise me, Beppo, thou wilt always do thy best.

BEPPO (*lightly*). I promise.

MONSEIGNEUR (*fiercely*). Nay, not like that! Swear it! Or, by the Blood, I will come to thee at nightfall in thy bed—ride on thy throat—choke thee!

BEPPO (*terrified*). Philippe! I swear!

MONSEIGNEUR. Good Beppo! Kiss me!

BEPPO (*tearfully*). Willingly! Beloved Philippe! (*And while the boys affectionately embrace, to hide his emotion, the good Bishop*

leaves them and disappears through the hangings out into the corridor. Then BEPPO kneels lovingly at his brother's feet.) And now it is my turn.

MONSEIGNEUR. To teach me ?

BEPPO. To cure thee, as I said I would.

MONSEIGNEUR. And how ?

BEPPO. Out there, in the sunshine. It has cured the thrushes, and why not thee ?

MONSEIGNEUR (*languidly*). Ah ! Out there ?

BEPPO. It is the place I always go to, when I myself am feeling wretchedly.

MONSEIGNEUR. Wretchedly ? Thou ?

BEPPO. Sometimes.

MONSEIGNEUR (*tenderly*). Hungry ?

BEPPO. Hunger is nothing. But to be restless, dissatisfied ; not often, but still sometimes. To feel oneself a beggar, an out-cast, friendless ; to be neither of the palace nor the hovel, yet to know oneself a part of each. In a word, Philippe, to feel oneself nothing ; just the foam on the surface of the river, the bubble that breaks and vanishes even before the broad stream is aware of its existence.

MONSEIGNEUR. Thou hast such feelings ? Thou ?

BEPPO. Sometimes. But when they come I take them where they always pass, and I am cured—as I will cure thee.

MONSEIGNEUR (*smiles*). And where is it ?—this wonderful healing-place of thine.

BEPPO. Out there—not far—on the warm slope below the Black Dog bastion. Thou knowest it ; beneath the great lilac bush, where this morning I found for thee the baby thrushes.

MONSEIGNEUR (*dreamily*). I know it well. Thence one can see for many, many leagues.

BEPPO (*eagerly*). Is it not so ? The wandering river that looks like milk and steals away, a ribbon fading in the mist. The woods, the farms, the little towers of the châteaux ; the distant steeple that points a finger for the country folk to God ! And here and there the bright glint of sunlight one fancies striking on the spears of some brave knight's company, riding and singing through the meadows ; yet 'tis only gleaming on the window of some lonely, peaceful manor.

MONSEIGNEUR (*gently*). I think thou art a poet, Beppo.



BEPP0 (*offended*). I hope not. I only tell thee what there is to see.

MONSEIGNEUR. I know it well. I saw it last in summer with my mother.

BEPP0. Now shalt thou see it in springtime, and with me; with all the orchard blossom, white and gay as brides with their bouquets. Come!

MONSEIGNEUR. Thou wilt take me there?

BEPP0. Aye! and cure thee of thy sickness. Thou wilt come?

MONSEIGNEUR (*yearningly*). If only thou wilt help me.

BEPP0. Walk but through the corridor, and I will carry thee down the great staircase and through the street and up the hill upon my back. And once there—under the lilac!—Come! (*As he helps MONSEIGNEUR to struggle to his feet.*) Now, then! Give me thine arm. So! Thine round my neck, and mine around thy body—so!—like girls who love each other. (*Laughing.*) Only we are men! *En avant! Marche!*

(*So they turn, laughing gaily, towards the hangings that mask the corridor; when suddenly is heard sharply and faintly from the courtyard below the brisk challenge of a sentinel—'Qui va là?' The boys pause and listen, while gradually nearer and louder each sentinel in turn rapidly repeats it—'Qui va là?—Qui va là?'—until close outside, at the end of the corridor, a rough, hoarse voice shouts—'On ne passe pas!' Follows the clash of steel, and a short, sharp cry of terror. Then complete silence.*)

MONSEIGNEUR (*in a frightened whisper*). Beppo!

BEPP0. But what is it? An alarm? Some thief? A gipsy?

MONSEIGNEUR (*trembling*). Nay, it is Death—for me!

BEPP0 (*with his arms tightly round him*). Death?

MONSEIGNEUR. He hath broken into the palace. Ah, Lorrain! Lorrain!—false soldier! Beppo! I can feel him—drawing nearer, ever nearer! He is there, behind the hanging. It is Death!

BEPP0 (*whispers*). Art thou sure? Shall I look?

MONSEIGNEUR. Aye, look. I dare not. (*And while BEPP0 stands there, shaken and undecided.*) Darest thou not?

BEPP0. Yea, I dare! (*With fear in his heart, he marches boldly to the hanging and swiftly withdraws it, the iron rings rattling and rippling sharply backwards along the rod; and behold! the wall of the corridor that faces them appears wondrously illuminated and transfigured into the faint vision of a chapel; and there on a*

*throne, under the dim high altar, the Angel of Death is seated, an austere and lonely figure, just visible under the mild and steady gleam of many a tall candle and hanging sanctuary lamp. There he sits waiting, as though the youthful Michelangelo had carved him there, with the dreadful dart!—And BEPPO sees it and screams.)* Monseigneur Death! Nay, take me—I beseech thee! Take me—in my brother's place. I am useless, friendless—a gipsy!—a vagabond!

MONSEIGNEUR. Nay, Beppo! I am still the duke here, and I do not permit it. It is for me he has come.

BEPPO. Philippe!

MONSEIGNEUR. Out of my way, brother; wouldst disgrace me before Him?

BEPPO. Philippe!

*(And the little MONSEIGNEUR draws himself to his full height, and, as though proudly entering the court and presence of some great rival power, bravely steps some of the few paces still left him towards the faint line, on the other side of which, only that he must cross it, there lies he knows not what. Only this he knows, that neither rank, nor ermine, nor soldiers, nor cannon will now avail him. So he boldly demands of the Figure that seems to look at him so kindly, full in the face:)*

MONSEIGNEUR. Thou wilt suffer me to kiss my brother first? To say good-bye? *(And as BEPPO still tries to hold him fast:)* Farewell, brother!—and remember! Nay, Beppo! *(And so he turns willingly towards the Angel, who now slowly rises to receive him.)*

BEPPO *(as he beats the air passionately with his hands)*. Philippe! Don't leave me! Beloved Philippe!

MONSEIGNEUR. But see, Beppo! He knows my quality; after all, he rises to receive me! Ah, now—it is easy! See, Beppo; how easy it is! *(And the little MONSEIGNEUR passes into the Angel's arms with a smile on his face and the happy laugh of a tired child who at last finds rest, and the vision fades; while BEPPO, with a desolating cry, tries to follow him, but his forces fail and he falls there in a swoon.)*

*The cry is so loud, so bitter, that the Nurse comes hurrying in.)*

NURSE *(angrily)*. Who is it, screaming so? *(She sees BEPPO.)* Ah! Monseigneur! See!—he has fainted! Doctor! *(as the Doctor and the Bishop come quickly in from the corridor.)* Monseigneur! *(Then she sees it is not MONSEIGNEUR, but BEPPO.)* Nay! it is—

BISHOP (*with authority*). Monseigneur ! Beppo has gone. I saw him. This time he has run away—for good.

NURSE (*puzzled*). Ah ? (*As she helps the Doctor to carry BEPPO to the chair.*)

BISHOP (*gaily*). He is better, Doctor, is he not ? The crisis hath passed ; he will recover ?

DOCTOR (*doubtfully, bending over the inanimate BEPPO in the chair*). I think so—with care.

BISHOP. Ah ! (*So he goes back into the corridor and shouts :*) The trumpets, Lorrain !—the trumpets ! Sound a fanfare ! A miracle ! Monseigneur recovers. The Duchy is safe !

NURSE (*after a glance at the Doctor*). A miracle, indeed ! (*And as the trumpets peal joyously and defiantly, she crosses herself and murmurs :*)—Monseigneur !

WALTER FRITH.

## THE CALL OF THE WEST.

### A SKETCH OF AN INDIAN REGIMENT.

THROUGH the 'Kutchā'<sup>1</sup> of the Derajat runs the Indus: it is a shifting river and its tremendous sword of water carves now this channel, now that, on its way to the sea. In 1914 many acres of trees fell before its silver blade in the wood of Turton's Folly that skirts the approach to the cantonment of Dera Ismail Khan. The road to the railhead at Darya Khan ever shifts with the river's whims, and is but a track across the drifting sand dunes of the desert. The Indus is a mighty traveller, and the bridge of boats is flung across her in a new place every autumn so that the road travels far from the obliterated line of the previous year. The folk whom one meets upon the road are nomads, or those persistent travellers the Powindahs, who pass over the desert and river in their thousands to leave no more trace than the clouds that travel with the wind. The history of the region is the history of hawk-like travellers; of Alexander the Great who came down the grim passes, horse, foot, and man; of raiders who travel right swiftly and of cavalry that pursues, to this very day. Only the city and the mountains speak of permanence, for the cantonment with its lines and its bungalows is but a halting ground for the soldier folk, who have no abiding place, but travel always like the shifting river and the sands and the winds of the Derajat.

In August 1914 every Sahib gripped his sword when he thought of home, but in the Derajat Brigade the declaration of war did little more than recall its officers from leave, and they came back many hundreds of miles to look at the mountains, whose tribesmen only respect a frontier that is held against them by armed men, as frowning follies that kept them back from real war. September saw a Punjab regiment marching towards those dark hills to take over the Gumal outposts, and another regiment marched back on relief into the cantonment. Very early in October the great conflict levied its first contribution; some sepoy and sowars of a Sikh regiment and a cavalry regiment left Dera Ismail Khan as reinforcements for other corps; leaves from the tree blown by the breeze to the war's whirlwind. But the cantonment still only stood sentry over the lawless

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* alluvial plain.

of the frontier hills, nor could move to the war. Then, on October 11, a summons came, and ran along the wires to the Punjabis' headquarters at Tank, and to Khajuri Kach, and Jandola, and the smaller outposts, that for the first time in the history of the frontier a regiment was to march away from the hills to war, to travel like the Indus to the sea, and cross the pathless ocean to the West.

Now those birds of passage, the Sahibs, go home by that familiar waterway, but for the man of the Punjab it was a summons to 'Active Service Overseas' and a strange land. Yet death is the strangest land of all to both Sahibs and sepoy, and in its vast region lies the eternal home of every traveller, so that they faced the way to the unknown right gladly together, and the reservists hastened to join them. There were as many rumours as there were men in the ranks, and each rumour was an enemy. To the Dogras there was the suggestion of violated caste in foreign lands; to the Sikh the pleasant whisper that the Raj feared the Khalsa and was carting the Sikhs away in ships to sink them; to the Pathan the assertion that the German Emperor and his Army were of the Mahomedan faith. But little cared the sepoy in the outposts—where doubtless they knew of the order before their officers, for the wires whisper many things well understood by the babus e'er ever they give official utterance—as they made haste to hand over to the Mahomedan regiment that marched hot foot to relieve them, while a regiment from down-country was railed north with all speed to keep the frontier cantonment at full strength. The Punjab regiment tramped into Dera Ismail Khan in little brown detachments that crossed the wide pale desert to the jingle of mules and the rumble of transport carts, and encamped on a bare parade ground awaiting orders. The General commanding the Derajat Brigade had his orders by then for the great war, so that the cantonment knew yet one more change. The Punjab regiment was extraordinarily busy; all the paraphernalia wherewith each human being encumbers himself, multiplied by one thousand, had to be dealt with. Mess trophies and treasures had to be packed; the regimental office had to be packed; all surplus kit had to be packed. Officers' bungalows found new tenants; officers' dogs found new owners; officers' wives stood ready for their voyage to England on such dates and in such ships as the embarkation officer's wire should direct. Very quickly the armed host shook itself free of encumbrance and stood equipped for war, the while post-cards from the sepoy's homes fluttered into their camp, pleading 'Come to me.

Don't go.' And the voices that answered this pleading of hidden wives, the voices that replied to the hundred rumours—deep voices of sepoys speaking in the vernacular—will ring in my heart till I die. Thus, a Sikh, speaking to his officer's wife of his 'house': 'Nay, Huzur, I have not written. What profit to write? She will but say, "Take leave and come, I am ill," and at this hour what man can get leave? This is without doubt no hour for leave. She will say, "Do not go," having no understanding, but the Presence knows that there is an Order to go. Therefore from Karachi I will send a post-card saying, "I have gone. *Bās!*"'<sup>1</sup> Yet it took thought for the welfare of its wives, this regiment of married men, and there was satisfaction in their tones when they announced to the Englishwoman,—'The Colonel Sahib says that the Government will make provision for them, and that it will be in no man's power to take it from them. *That* money will be no one's "hukh,"'<sup>2</sup> Protector of the Poor.' Some hundred husbands knew content at the word of one man,—'the Colonel Sahib says.' And thus the Indian officers, very courteously,—'We have eaten your salt and we fear nothing: it is good that we go.' The Hindus spoke ever of the King, 'Our King calls us,' but the Mahomedan looked to his officer, 'My Sahib is pleased to go; I also am pleased.' All ranks spoke of the regiment's name: 'It is good for the name of the regiment that we go.'

A stripling rose up from among the hot shadows on the veranda, 'Huzur, I am now the Sahib's orderly. When the regiment went to Somaliland my father was the Sahib's orderly. My father is dead, but I am the orderly of the Sahib.' Something more here than the vow taken on enlistment: some vow this of the heart's own making. And in the camp a spirit stirring among the menials: a young sweeper, son of a line sweeper, salaaming low to his Mem-sahib, 'I am known to all men of the regiment, I go with the regiment.' Surely they go upward as they go onward, these armed hosts of men who lift such humble beings out of the dust of themselves?

The club in the evenings was very gay, as though the fierceness of man was forged from bright metal. The comradeship was deep; 'brothers in arms' meant much to those soldier folk; the unspoken word was expressed in every handgrip, 'Honorary member of my table, you give me orders, or take mine, but both serve King and Country—here's luck to you.' And when, on October 27,

<sup>1</sup> 'Enough!'

<sup>2</sup> Perquisite.

the Punjab regiment went forth to the war of the world, the courtesy and the tremendous sentiment which the Army feels for the Army was written plain by the cantonment for the city to see. And the city watched in little groups that drifted out through its narrow gates and took up positions where the desert breaks away from the military roads, and the piety of a Hindu has built a bathing place for such pilgrims as desire to perform orthodox ablutions in the waters of the hurrying river. Balu Ram's Ghat was bleached by vivid sunshine, and an old Brahman accepted the respectful greetings of such as were not thrice-born. The portly tradesman of the cantonment, Beli Ram, whisked up on his bicycle and waited to watch them pass—those Sahibs who jested with him and paid his big bills when promotion worked miracles. Fat and lazy, yet not without shrewd enterprise; plausible and intriguing, but keeping faith in much; charitable, good-natured, indulgent to little children, he was well known to every man, woman, and child in the throng, and those sacrificial men of war, about to set forth on their perilous way, would carry him with them in their memories as 'not half a bad fellow, old Beli Ram.'

In an empty bungalow among the litter of packing-cases, one young bearer was weeping shamefacedly. For many days he had protested his wish to follow his Sahib's fortunes, but the night before departure the unknown had assumed a terrific aspect: the landsman dreaded the sea, the servant feared the bloody service of war—the spirit failed. His small bundles swayed aloft on a laden camel towards Darya Khan, but he stayed behind.

In one of the city dwellings two low-caste men, a syce and his brother, argued through the drowsy noon. Family debt, family affection cried 'Stay,' and so the charger was led to the door by an orderly who, saluting, announced 'The syce has run away, what can be done? Nothing can be done. He has entirely departed, the son of Satan.'

The General and his Staff rode through the troops and took up a position beyond the Ghat. The band of a Sikh regiment sent its music rolling out over the river and the dunes. The wives of the officers made a little knot close to the shrine.

The disciplined wheat-coloured companies rippled out on to the dusty road, and those waiting by Balu Ram's Ghat heard a shout rise deep-throated from its ranks, heard a cheer rise from the troops, horse, foot and guns, that lined its route, and heard the echoes die away across the desert sands, to rise and fall again and again.



In England regiments were marching through London Town, and the traffic was being held back at the crossings, while the housemaids threw open the upper windows and waved handkerchiefs; but by October crowds were silent, having grown weary of cheering the new warlike pageant of their thronged streets. In the hearts of the watching wives, and in the hearts of the British officers, the thoughts were of that hour at home, and not a little of the verdict which the people of those busy streets would pass on these Indian soldiers marching out of Dera Ismail Khan: men of strange faiths, men of diverse tongues, men of no education save for that stern schooling of war decreed by David the soldier poet—'Thy right hand shall teach thee *terrible* things.' Doran had raised this clan in 1857 at the urgent bidding of Lawrence, and it had crossed the seas in turn to China, Burma, and Somaliland, but never with so ill a wind, blowing no man aught of good, as is brewed to-day in Germany's poisonous cauldrons. It had fought its way to Kabul, and been taken out of victorious action by a subaltern at Ali Masjid, but no mine nor shell had laid its young men low. It had nursed a British regiment that was sick unto death with cholera, and knew no white man by name, or sight, who would slay women, children, and the wounded. Long ago, in November 1858, it had passed from the service of stout John Company to the great service of the Crown, and for fifty-three years it served Empress and Emperors before it laid eyes on the person of its Sovereign, what time each Hindu officer and sepoy, among the millions of Calcutta folk, accounted that sacred privilege of beholding King George more favourable to the soul than three pilgrimages piously performed. In all its history only one man had set foot in England, an Afridi subadar, who attended the Coronation and returned full of mighty tales of the fabulous amount of milk given by our cows, of the work of scavengers done by Jews only, and many things hard to credit. But it was familiar with things strange to the far-off British Isles, this Indian regiment; earthquakes had tossed the villages of the Dogras to rubbish heaps in the spring of 1905, and for weary years plague had stricken the homes of Sikhs and Punjabi Mahomedans, while the neighbours of the Khattaks and Afridis ever held finger to rifle trigger. Neither pestilence, famine, battle, murder, nor sudden death were unknown to the men whose footsteps the knot of watchers by the Ghat could hear approaching, though months of sunless skies and sodden ground, bitter poverty of European slums, flowers tossed to

the man of the East by white women, vast lands without mosque or temple or breath of the thronged bazaar, were things outside their experience, and beyond their imagination, on that October noonday.

The lay mind may fear or favour a regiment's violence, but it is extraordinarily prone to lose sight of a regiment's vocation. Now it had been brought home to one of the Englishwomen watching that regiment go forth to war that its strength was dedicated ; for on a cold November morning in the Punjab she had seen a line of recruits drawn up opposite the battalion, and had heard the oath and affirmation taken in the vernacular which appointed each recruit a soldier and not a mere public executioner. Roughly translated, this is what she had heard,—‘ I do swear,’ the Hindu youngster vowed ; ‘ I do swear by the holy Granth,’ declared the Sikh stripling ; ‘ I do solemnly affirm in the presence of Almighty God,’ the youthful Punjabi Mahomedan and Pathan said ;—‘ that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty the King Emperor, his heirs, and successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully serve in His Majesty's Indian Forces, and go wherever I am ordered by land or by sea. And that I will observe and obey all commands of any officer set over me, *even to the peril of my life.*’ Thus, all the lusty yeomen of the northern plains and hills, among whom the Hindus added, ‘ So help me God.’ Whereupon, very impressively, the battalion paid its highest honour, and gave its most profound welcome, to its sworn men by presenting arms to them. Moreover, in this matter of vocation, the handful of British officers, who, from the day of the regiment's birth, had guided it in the way it should go through succeeding generations, held a mandate that invoked supreme authority :

‘ *By the Grace of God . . . Defender of the Faith . . .* to our trusty and well beloved . . . Gentleman, greeting. We, reposing special trust and confidence in your loyalty, courage, and good conduct, do by these presents constitute and appoint you to be an Officer . . . and you are at all times to exercise and well discipline in arms, both the inferior officers and men serving under you, and use your best endeavours to keep them in good order and discipline. And We do hereby command them to obey you as their superior officer, and you to observe and follow such orders and directions, as from time to time you shall receive from Us or any your Superior Officer, according to the rules and discipline of war in pursuance of the trust hereby reposed in you.’

14-2

And so when, across the shadeless parade ground where only the clouds threw shadows, the shouting ranks approached the Ghat, it was plain that each soldier felt with the Israelites of old that it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes or in man, for the Dogras were calling on Kali, the Sikhs on their Gurus, and the Mahomedans on Allah the God of Battles.

Only a bugler was given to frivolity. Some weeks before, in the pride of his schooling, he had questioned a Memsahib eagerly, 'Can the Presence read? Can the Presence write?' and was crest-fallen at meeting his match. Yet a professional hope remained. 'Can the Presence beegle?'<sup>1</sup> he challenged, and established complete superiority. His mother had stood by his side that day; a tall, dignified, strictly secluded woman of the purdah, but neither she, nor any Indian wife or mother of the sepoy folk, stood watching the regiment depart. Only the Englishwomen bade all God speed, while the happy little bugler went forth to war and cheered his own performance.

The British officers wheeled their chargers up to the group of their countrywomen; and the Indian officers left the shouting companies to step aside, salute, and shake hands. Then all passed on. The Sikh band struck up 'For Auld Lang Syne,' and many thought of the gallant comrade who would never be forgotten by his regiment, now leaving his lonely grave behind. It was a strangely dramatic chance that turned this regiment of all regiments away from the hills of the Mahsuds, for scarce six months were gone since that day when, with reversed arms, it had laid to rest the great Dodd, soldier, ruler, and friend of the frontier where he fell, foully murdered, amid the false peace of his own border garden. On the day of his burial the thunder roared from the treacherous hills, the Last Post bade him sleep well, the solemn volleys promised stern remembrance, and every officer and man of his regiment longed to avenge him according to the Rules of War. But the orders and directions ran otherwise, and so 'Doran Sahib-ki-Paltan' marched away from Waziristan, through Balu Ram's Ghat, with all the officers of the brigade bearing it good company as far as the bridge of boats across the Indus, whence it set forth to a destination unknown, with the trusty and well-beloved Gentlemen leading.

That night the young bearer realised suddenly that his Sahib had gone, and, like a dog that misses his master and gives chase,

<sup>1</sup> Bugle.

he stood up and clamoured to the officer's wife, 'Huzur, get me an ekha that I may now drive to Darya Khan while there is yet time. Without doubt I must of necessity go with my Sahib.' Half an hour later a scarecrow wrapped in a blanket stood at her door, and a syce's voice insisted, 'Memsahib ! Memsahib ! get me an ekha and I will go to the Sahib and Moti the mare. And give no money to my brother, Huzur, for he has taken all my clothes so that I should not go. But I go now very swiftly. There is four annas to pay to the khansamah, if the Presence will give it ? Salaam !'

And over the dim desert, through the starless night, by the groping light of little crazy oil lamps, with endless joltings and bumpings, to where the sleeping regiment waited to entrain at dawn, there drove urgently Burgwan Das, bearer, and Bhagu, syce.

JOHN TRAVERS.

## THE DAY.

As the cathedral chimes struck eleven, Hubert Quality raised the corner of the blind and looked into the street.

A deep peace reigned; the cobbles of the road glistened from recent rain; wet wads of yellowed leaves padded the pavements. Very far away on the horizon, a fitful red quiver told of heathen fires lighted to the dark god Thor.

No human form was visible in the street. Yet Quality shrank from the uneasy sensation that some one was spying upon him.

Bracing himself with an effort, he looked up furtively into the indigo vault of the heavens—knowing the while that he was about to be subjected to some fresh demonstration of trickery on the part of his nerves.

Instantly, he started back with a stifled cry.

A face was watching him from the moon.

For several full seconds it bleached him, the unhuman stare of century-old eyes, before it blended again into the blank silver disc.

With shaking fingers, Quality dropped the curtain—the pallor of his face and the twitching of his features testifying to the cumulative effect of oft-repeated shocks.

For the past two weeks, his terror-maddened nerves had rent him with the strength of lunatic devils—making every heart-beat leap like a bead of quicksilver, and chopping up each breath into demi-semiquavers of panting panic. Only the consciousness of one supreme fact held them back from their objective—the wreck of Quality's sanity.

On the morrow, their victim was going home.

It was his day.

The most cursory glance at his face proclaimed him the predestined prey of his imagination. His dreamy eyes, sensitive mouth, and delicate physique denoted him student—or visionary—rather than man of action, and, as such, averse from any act or form of violence.

During the siege and occupation of the town by the enemy, in his rôle of spectator, he had been plunged into a super-hell, in which he groped in a red delirium—fire-flecked and blood-smudged. His razor-keen sympathies supplying the lack of experience, he

had died, by proxy, many deaths a day. He had seen human faces blasted by the red-hot touch of the Martian hand, and the sight had not been good to see. Above all, his ears were deafened by the constant terrific speech of great guns that spoke.

Peace—passionately he prayed for it. And to-morrow that peace would be his.

Soothed by the mere thought of his imminent release, he turned back again towards the room which he had grown to hate. It was a prim, mid-Victorian-looking apartment, stuffy from a porcelain stove and crowded with horsehair furniture. At the round table of highly polished walnut-wood, his landlady sat at her knitting.

Apparently about forty years of age, madame was of ponderous build, clumsy as a Flemish horse, with massive heaving shoulders, and broad hips. Abundant black hair was brushed back from her face and gathered in a knot on the top of her head. Her sallow skin was partially redeemed by the beauty of her eyes—velvet-brown and fringed with thick lashes. Her full lips were pencilled with a fine line of black down. It was a typical enough face of a daughter of the people, sprung from peasant stock and now the wife of a small tradesman.

This was the woman whom Quality feared with his very soul.

When he had first rented her apartment, she had reminded him of a woman in a fairy-tale, who, while apparently honest and homely, concealed under her ordinary exterior that element of the sinister supernatural that often accompanies such histories. Thus looked the pleasant-faced female, who afterwards figured as the ogress; thus appeared the harmless peasant, who changed nightly into a were-wolf.

It was not his fanciful idea of a composite personality, however, which inspired Quality's dislike of his landlady. That had come with the knowledge that she was utterly lacking in the usual sentiments of humanity. Undisturbed by any horrors of the siege, and showing neither pity nor fear, she continued her daily routine with the mechanical precision of a machine. The sole interest that she ever showed in her boarder was connected with the weekly note.

It was since the War that his distaste had magnified into fear. And his fear was the craven terror of one who, amidst hostile surroundings, carries his very life on a tongue-string. For Fate, choosing her instrument with callous cruelty, had ordained that he should serve his country by means of those subterranean methods, for which the punishment is summary death.

Quality now eyed the woman with the oblique glance of suspicion.

How much did madame know? Did she merely suspect? Was her inaction a sign of ignorance? Or was she on crouch, biding her time to pounce?

Yet through the shifting mists of those dream-days of doubt and fear—when rustling leaves tracked him homewards, and his own shadow slipped away to denounce him—one fact remained real and potent. He knew that all appeal to madame's feminine compassion would be vain. If she possessed his secret, she would certainly betray him.

Again he looked at her, marking, with strong dislike, the rust-red grain of her skin over her cheek-bones, the tight tartan-silk blouse, the stiff linen collar that made her neck appear so dirty by contrast. The room, with its hideous-patterned paper seemed to wall him in alive; the charcoal fumes from the stove to suffocate him.

Then, suddenly, he smiled. All this, too, would pass away. Next week, he would rub his eyes and wonder if—somewhere—on some alien planet, there really existed a strange, hostile room, tenanted by an unhuman, sawdust-stuffed woman. Both would dwindle down to a name on an envelope—merely an address.

In the reaction of spirits, he stooped to pick up madame's ball of worsted.

'The last time I shall do this for you, madame!'

Even as he spoke, his morbid mind quarrelled with his sentence; it seemed as though its finality left a loophole for sinister interpretation.

'*Bien!*'

'Shall you miss me, madame?'

'Yes.' Her '*si*' was emphatic. 'As one misses all men. Less work, but, unfortunately, less money.'

The speech, typical of the frugal housekeeper of grasping spirit, was reassuring. He smiled once more as he looked at the clock.

'You're late to-night, madame! You should save your eyesight—or, better still, your oil and fuel. Aren't you going to bed at all?'

She shook her head vehemently.

'For me, I have no stomach for bed, at all, at all. To sleep would be but to see again that which I have, this day, seen. What? Have you not heard?'



He shook his head.

'Ah! What misfortune! To-day, at noon, they shot M. Lemoine!'

M. Lemoine—the prominent citizen and advocate! Quality could not credit the news. His mind conjured up a vivid picture of that portly form and plum-coloured face, as madame proceeded.

'Yes, m'sieur, I saw it. It was horrible. Two soldiers ran him down the steps of the hotel—quick, quick! yet, at every step, one saw him shrink. It was as though a hole had been pierced in him, so that the *man* came leaking through. At the top, there was the fine figure—so brave, so big; at the bottom, only a shrunken stranger, with eyes that ran, ran, and fingers that picked, and little bubbles around his lips, rising, rising. He—*himself*—was gone. There was no longer any M. Lemoine!'

Told in her native tongue, with pantomimic gesture to point her words, the recital was ghastly.

Breathing heavily, Quality cleared his throat to ask a question.

'What was the charge?'

Surely the woman must notice the treacherous quiver of his voice! Her answer seemed to be delayed for an eternity.

'The charge, m'sieur?—He was a spy!'

'Ah!'

Quality sank down upon a bristly horsehair chair, the crocheted antimacassar slipping down behind his back. He looked around him with eyes of sick loathing. The clicking sound of madame's needles maddened him; he had watched the incessant flash of steel for so many long-drawn-out evenings of strain.

The flawed mirror, set above the marble console table, reflected the room, duplicating the gilt clock on the mantelshelf and the pallid waxen fruit, cherished under crystal shades. Presently, however, the hateful vision blurred and faded away, and the home-sick man saw, in its stead, the picture that was engraved upon his mind.

Somewhere, far away from this place of thunder, bloodshed, and cold fears—geographical facts non-existent—was an isle that rocked gently, like an ark of safety, on the grey-green seas. And tucked away, within its very heart, approached only by grass-grown ruts, was a long, grey house. Sentinelled by age-old oaks, there brooded over it the very spirit of security and peace.

Again he sat in his own familiar study, surrounded by the good company of his books, while the fire burned red in the grate

and his old hound dozed upon the rug at his feet. This was his proper place—his own *milieu*—of which he thought by day and dreamed by night.

His longings to escape magnified these nightly dreams into passions. He was always trying to get home. He took abortive railway journeys, when the train broke down and changed into inadequate rubbish, leaving him stranded in unfriendly country. Sometimes he boarded a steamer, which ploughed its way through fields and streets, ever seeking a far-receded sea. These nightmares were varied by the nerve-racking experience of ceaseless preparations for a journey, which ended in the poignant pang of reaching the station only to see the express dash through, its lighted windows merging into one golden streak.

Often, too, he tried to fly home—even as a bird—swooping from his bedroom window in vain essay at flight, and sinking lower into the darkness at each impotent stroke.

His distraught mind, flashing its S.O.S. signals across the sea, must have stirred the rest of those who slumbered safely in that lamppost-lit, policeman-guarded isle. For influence began its wire-pulling work, its efforts resulting in the promise of the special train that was to convey certain refugees homewards by way of neutral territory.

To-morrow would be the day.

‘I am going home—to-morrow!’

He silently repeated the words with a thrill of joyful anticipation, fingering his papers and passport the while, to assure himself of their truth. Thus fortified, he nerved himself for another question.

‘By the way, madame, speaking of poor M. Lemoine. Who—who gave information?’

‘A woman betrayed him.’

Involuntarily, Quality started. He had not before noticed the grating rasp of madame’s voice. It irritated him to unreasonable resentment and disgust.

‘A woman? Damnable!’

‘*Plût-il?*’ Madame raised her brows in interrogation. ‘But why? M. Lemoine sold his secrets for gold. The woman sold her secret for gold. *C’est égal!*’

How furiously her needles flew! In just such manner must her forbears have sat, knitting and counting in the blood-sodden days of the Revolution.

‘But, madame’—Quality’s voice was vibrant with horror—

'how can you call it *equal*? It is inconceivable that a woman, with a woman's heart beating within her breast, should sell a life merely for money!'

'Ah, m'sieur!'—Madame laughed mirthlessly—'it is easy to see that all your life you have had more than enough. For the others, though—What will they not do for gold?'

She proceeded to answer her own question by illustration.

'My young brother killed the farmer that he worked for, the farmer's wife, four children, and a farm-hand—all for the sake of the gold that was in the house. Alone he did it, with a hatchet—and he but a child of fifteen! Such a good lad, and regular with his Mass. It was merely the gold that maddened him, and yet they imprisoned him—*le pauvre*!'

At last Quality had heard the thrill of emotion in her voice. Looking up, he detected a bead of moisture in her eyes. The sight of her sorrow only added to the horror. On top of her calm recital of the crime, such sympathy for the juvenile monster was nauseating.

'Your young brother must be a unique specimen,' he said stiffly, speaking with an effort.

'Not at all. Like all the rest of us. Like you, perhaps. Certainly, like me!'

A pleasant family history. To steady his nerves, Quality fingered his papers feverishly, repeating the while his magic formula: 'To-morrow, I go home.'

Even as his lips silently framed the words, he started back, blinking his eyes, and momentarily stunned and deafened. For it seemed to him that a lighted express had shot, shrieking, through the room, like a rocket—thundering past him in a long golden streak.

It was only a fresh manifestation of infamous buffoonery on the part of his nerves, yet it left Quality utterly shaken. He felt suddenly stranded and abandoned. All his vague fears and doubts of the past days sharpened into a definite pang of fear.

Was he, in actual fact, going home to-morrow? Or was he called upon to undergo the supreme anguish of cheated hope? To see his prison-bars opening—only to slam again in his face?

As, still unstrung from shock, he looked round the room, he was a prey of minor optical delusions. Madame seemed to have swollen in bulk—the apartment to have grown distinctly smaller. He hated it with the savage hatred of a convict for his concrete cell.

Inaction became unendurable, and he pushed back his chair.

'I'm going out, madame.'

'No, m'sieur. No, *no* !'

'Why not ?'

Suspicion stabbed him anew at madame's vehement outcry. Yet her next words were reassuring by reason of their sound common sense.

'Because, m'sieur, it is too late. See, it wants but a little to midnight. It might arouse suspicion in this place, where every brick has an eye. To-morrow, you return to your own country. How imprudent to risk your liberty thus, at the eleventh hour !'

His head approved the wisdom of the woman's words. Once again, he saw her as she was—callous, mercenary, possibly—but, for the rest, an ordinary hard-working housewife of her class.

Again he sat down, watching the flashing points of her needles, until his mind gave a sudden slip—and he found himself thinking with drowsy amusement of the Sheep in 'Alice through the Looking-glass.'

He roused himself with a violent start—to find that madame had laid down her wool, and was watching him intently. The reflection from the lamp fell on her eyes, lighting therein twin balls of orange flame.

'What is it, madame ?'

'Nothing ! I thought I heard a knocking at the street door, that is all.'

'I heard nothing. But, then, I was nearly asleep.'

'Best so.' Her voice thickened. 'Get all the sleep you can—in preparation for the morrow !'

As she snatched up her knitting, he stared at her, all drowsiness dissipated by her words. He watched her furious energy, trying the while to conceive some adequate motive for her unusual vigil and her evident wish for his own company.

Of a sudden, instinct supplied the knowledge.

*Madame was waiting for something to happen.*

Like vultures scenting their prey, his nerves instantly swooped down on their victim, agonising him with the refined torture of mirage. As the parched traveller feasts hollow eyes on waving date-palm and bubbling well, so Quality, with aching intensity of longing, saw a clear picture of his own familiar room. He smelt the faint odour of worn leather ; heard the crackling whisper of the wood fire ; felt the muzzle of his hound moist against his hand

Would the day never come? He looked at the clock, crookedly upheld by misshapen gilded cupids.

Only a quarter to twelve.

Slowly, slowly, the minutes ticked away. The night was dying hard.

Presently, Quality noticed that madame had laid down her needles and was again listening. Her tense attitude, flattened ears, and craning neck told of an intensity of purpose that would strain her aural organs beyond the limits of their powers.

He saw her sudden start—the involuntary wince.

'Footsteps, m'sieur! Do you not hear them? Footsteps without in the street!'

'I can hear nothing!'

'But they are passing this way. Open the window, and see if there is anyone in the street!'

What was she? Quality could not decide. Merely the shrewd, suspicious housewife, with natural fears—or the composite fearsome creation of his diseased imagination?

With the reluctant step of one who fears a snare, he walked to the window, and, opening it, looked out into the street.

A deep tranquillity reigned without. The old houses, steeped in the milky bath of moonshine, seemed to sway gently, as though in sleep; the sable shadow of the drinking-fountain seemed to rock, as though the ancient town slumbered to the croon of some unheard lullaby.

'Ah, how peaceful!' Madame had arisen and was now standing by his side. Her breath, onion-flavoured from her last meal, fell on his cheek in hot puffs.

'What a picture! And see the leaves, how they fly!'

At a sudden gust of wind, the withered foliage arose from the bare boughs like a flock of birds, and soared into the air in a mad ecstasy of flight—rising, wheeling, swooping—only to sink, feebly fluttering, to the pavement.

With a cold chill of premonition, Quality recalled his own dream of impotent flight.

'See, the floating leaves are like *revenants*! Or, perhaps, the souls—ever rising in their thousands—swarming from field and trench. Whither? Whither?—Ah!'

She recoiled with a cry as a leaf, fluttering in through the window, brushed against her face, and then fell, brown and shrivelled, at her feet.

She stooped and picked it up.

'Blasted!'

The sound of her whisper was terrible. In the moonlight, her face appeared to be blanched to a greenish-white hue. Involuntarily, Quality saw, in a lightning flash of clairvoyance, the white, dripping face of a peasant boy, with wolfish eyes glowing yellow, as he felt the edge of his axe with tremulous fingers.

'Ah, m'sieur, our last night together!' Inspired by unusual affection, madame pressed his arm. 'To-morrow, you will be gone. But what of me? *Hélas!* what of me?'

'You?' Quality strove to speak naturally. 'Oh, very soon I hope the Allies will make good, and your town be again cleared of the enemy.'

'The enemy? Ah!'

Madame broke off abruptly. Following the direction of her gaze, Quality also looked at the fountain darkly carved against the luminous sky.

Obedient to the dictate of his mountebank nerves, it slightly altered its position. Or was it a shape that slipped farther into the depths of its shadow?

'The enemy!' Madame raised her voice shrilly, with startling lack of caution. 'Who *is* the enemy? Have you ever given a thought to the lot of us who live in a province that to-day is French and to-morrow German? Can one say with certainty: "This one is French; that one German"? No, no, m'sieur! My name may be French as the wife of a French spouse, but I have German blood in my veins—German sympathies—love of the Fatherland—deep hatred for all his foes!'

Again the fountain moved, to give sign that it had heard.

In a last desperate effort to preserve his sanity, Quality slammed down the window, forcing a laugh the while.

'Come, madame! That's not a very friendly sentiment. You cannot mean what you say. You are overstrung—got nerves.'

'Nerves? *Bien!* To-night, I see always M. Lemoine.'

She sank down heavily, her fingers groping for her knitting. The steel needles began to click with mechanical precision.

Quality looked at the clock. It wanted but three minutes to twelve.

The day was near its birth.

At the same moment, madame broke the silence.

'Courage, m'sieur!' Her teeth flashed in a smile. 'We were both wrong. There were no footsteps, after all!'

Her words, vibrant with cheerful sympathy, awoke in Quality a response that was almost electric. Suspicion and fear melted at the warm touch of humanity. The devils that had possessed and tormented him, went out of him, leaving him wrapped in a foretaste of that peace that passeth understanding.

He saw the room dimly, as though through a veil of blue transparency, in a new guise. It was the abode of warmth and comfort—a domestic interior. Madame, smiling over her work, was a type of tranquil femininity.

Suddenly, without warning, the all-pervading calm was shattered.

There was the sound of loud knocking on the street door. The violent double-beat of Quality's heart seemed almost its echo. He started upright, every frayed nerve at utmost stretch; his eyes searching madame's face as though he would read therein the Riddle of the Sphinx.

There was a rapid, breathless exchange of question and answer.

'There is some one at the door, madame.'

'I hear.'

'Who can it be?'

'Who knows? Visitors, perhaps.'

'At this hour! Why do you not open to them?'

'Why? Marie will doubtless hear.'

In the pause that followed, the knocking again sounded, louder and more peremptory, as though the door were battered by the impact of a mailed fist.

Still mute to its summons, madame sat motionless, her needles flying with incredible rapidity.

Then, higher up in the building, a door opened. Hurried shuffling footsteps descended the stair and pattered along the passage.

'*C'est Marie.*'

As she spoke, Madame raised her face, and, for the first time, Quality saw her eyes.

Swiftly he averted his own, shrinking back before that stare of unholy guilt.

She had betrayed him.

For a fractional measure of time, he was rent by the throes of an elemental passion to grip the woman's throat and wring out her life in bubbling breaths. But the wholly foreign impulse came and passed almost simultaneously at the grating scream of a withdrawn bolt.



The sound of a man's voice, sharp and peremptory, drowned the woman's quavering tones in a rapid colloquy.

Then there was silence, followed by the slam of a door.

Quality's whole frame shook in a tempestuous ague of suspense.

Had they gone again? Was the blow to be averted at the eleventh hour? Were his hopes yet to find consummation?

Even as he asked the question, the answer came.

There was the sound of heavy footsteps along the passage.

Once more, Quality's hunted glance flickered around the room, with the sharpened sense of the trapped quarry, seeking desperately for some channel of escape.

His eyes fell upon the papers lying on the table before him. He began to read them with dull interest. *Who* was this Hubert Quality whose harmlessness and integrity were vouched for in black and white? What of him?

Bereft of all sense of identity—calmly expectant—he watched the door burst open.

It seemed the final performance of an oft-rehearsed drama. Inside—they were actually inside at last; these oft-dreamed-of figures of his fears—stern-faced men, wearing the grey Prussian uniform.

Before him was the officer, seemingly magnified to unhuman stature, in long, belted coat and spiked helmet. His eyes, blue and polar, raked the room. His voice, sharp and metallic, gave the word of command. He was no man, but merely a vehicle of inexorable justice—a machine that has found its range.

Slowly, slowly, Quality arose to his feet. He stretched out his hands.

Arose—only to sink back in his seat. For, at the sound of a woman's laugh, he realised that he was but the spectator in another's drama.

With a soldier on either side of her, madame stood rigid and frozen. No need for plea or denial; in her lying outburst of apostasy to the fountain, she had made her ultimate appeal.

As the spy passed through the doorway, Quality saw her face. And it was even as the face of M. Lemoine.

The clock struck twelve.

Through the shrivelled sheath of the dead night broke the glorious promise of the new day.

E. L. WHITE.

## IN THE NORTH SEA.

BY LIEUTENANT R.N.

THE operation that I am about to describe was not one of primary importance, nor is it likely to be chronicled in the History of the War when that comes to be written ; but it was nevertheless an incident of some interest and hazard, and serves to demonstrate the completeness of England's command of the sea.

It was one day in March 1915 that we left our base and steamed eastward across the North Sea towards the enemy's coast. We were not a strong force, but we were all fast ships, light cruisers and destroyers, and could show a clean pair of heels to any German big ships that we might meet. It was not expected, however, that the Germans would show themselves outside their ports, for it was less than two months since the *Blucher* had met her end at the hands of Beatty's battle-cruisers, and the German squadrons were not prepared as yet, either morally or materially, for another encounter.

Accompanying us, that is escorted by us, were three seaplane carriers, the object of our operations being a repetition of the Christmas Day air raid.

All the way across we had fine calm weather, and our hopes ran high that the conditions would be sufficiently favourable for launching aircraft ; for aircraft, and especially seaplanes which are encumbered with heavy air-resisting floats, are still sufficiently in their infancy to require very favourable weather conditions if they are to operate successfully at sea.

At daylight on the following morning we found ourselves some thirty odd miles off the enemy's coast in a position favourable for launching our attack, and since, coincidentally, some wily astrologer, in a fit of verbose optimism, had prophesied a naval battle for this date we had considerable hopes of 'something doing.'

As day broke a heavy mist lay across our horizon which, spreading outward from the coast, limited visibility to two or three miles. We assured ourselves, however, that as soon as the sun rose the mist would clear, and so for about half an hour the squadron manœuvred to and fro, the while optimist and

pessimist, according to their respective fancies, conceived momentary, and usually imaginary, changes in the density of the mist.

The pilots of the seaplanes were rapidly swallowing an early breakfast—it is one of the outstanding disadvantages of war that one has to eat and fight at times altogether repellent to the digestion—or else, with conscientious mechanics, were giving their engines a final test, as the familiar roar of the gnomes echoing from the carriers plainly told us.

But ere long the optimists proved themselves the truer prophets, for by 7 A.M. or so the mist was perceptibly thinner, and the flagship signalled the course which would bring us to our exact destination.

Stationed on each side of us as a submarine screen were divisions of destroyers, whilst the seaplane carriers, hauling out of line, formed up separately with their own destroyer escort.

At about 7.45 the preparatory signal flew from the flagship's masthead, and with all hands at the guns we stood by, whilst the seaplane carriers prepared to hoist out their machines. But, alas for the aspirations of man, at this very moment a thick bank of fog gathered ahead of us, and in less than five minutes the squadron was enveloped in a 'pea-soup' fog, hiding ship from ship as effectively as if a cloud of poison gas had been launched at us.

Flying was definitely off, but only to be replaced by another game, for we were now steaming twenty knots direct at Germany, and it would ill befit the pride of the British Navy if a squadron of her daisiest ships stranded helplessly on the Hun coast.

But here was a problem. Before you turn a squadron the amount of the turn must be indicated to all ships; yet here visual signals were impossible—they would not have been visual in such a fog; syren signals were inadvisable on account of their noisy advertisement, and also the process of sound signalling is very slow; a wireless signal was an alternative, and was the quickest and surest way, but it was a way very liable to inform the enemy as to our whereabouts, for an English wireless call is as different to a German one as a gentleman to a Hun, so that any signal we made would be easily picked up by adjacent enemy stations, and the 'strength' of the signals would tell them how close we were.

War, however, is a succession of risks, and since the need demanded, the signal was made. (One hopes it caused a flutter in the German dovescots.)

The leading ships turned a right angle to starboard by two successive turns of four points, the rest of the squadron followed in

their wake, and for a few minutes we ran parallel to the coast; the same signals and manœuvre repeated, and we had reversed our original course, and were steaming seawards with our sterns to Germany.

How simple it sounds, doesn't it? but the practical execution of such signals is not so easy in a fog, when the guide you are groping after cannot be seen and is able to show herself only by the bubbles which rise in her wake. Add to this that you have all had to reduce your speed by signal, which means that if you obey the signal a minute too late your excess speed causes you to rush up alongside your next ahead, or if you obey too soon you will drop astern and can no longer pick out those invaluable swirls and bubbles. But, worst danger of all, if one ship misses the signal and holds steadily on her course whilst her consorts ahead and astern and on each side of her turn at right angles, what is going to prevent a collision? 'Joss,' and 'joss' in large quantities, is the only preventative I can cite, and this was the very element that was absent that day.

One of the rear destroyers was the 'lucky party' who missed the signal—the first alter course signal by wireless—and she continued on her course, whilst those ahead and outside her altered across her bows.

The aforesaid 'joss' might have caused her to cross the line through a gap, but instead there suddenly loomed right ahead of her, out of the dense pall of fog, the blurred silhouette of a light cruiser, and before ever the engines could be reversed or the helm put over she had crashed bows on at twenty knots into the beam of the cruiser.

The comparatively frail bows of the destroyer crumpled under the blow like so much brown paper, and the boat recoiled with fifteen feet of her bow 'concertina-ed' in.

Yet never a soul on board of her was hurt. 'Joss' certainly made up leeway there, but in the bigger vessel such was not the case. The impact of the blow had lifted a torpedo tube off its mounting and had thrown it inboard against the casings, crushing five unfortunate men, of whom three lost their lives.

In addition the hull of the ship had suffered considerable damage, so that her speed was reduced to a bare ten knots, whilst the destroyer, at first able to steam six knots, could soon make no headway at all.

And all this, mark you, within thirty miles of the German

coast in a 'pea-soup' fog, so that no sooner had the two ships collided and fallen apart than they were lost to sight of each other and of the remainder of the fleet, who continued their groping course seaward, the majority unaware that aught was amiss.

One destroyer, however, had noted the accident, and altering out from her station stood by her damaged consort and forthwith made preparations to take her in tow; for if one thing was more evident than another, it was the desirability of getting the damaged ships away to seaward before the fog should lift leaving them to be discovered by some inquisitive Hun submarine or aircraft patrol.

A wireless signal—it had to be done—was sent as soon as possible to the flagship from the damaged cruiser, and the squadron turned back on their track to try to locate and assist the damaged craft. But noon came—it was soon after 8 A.M. when the two ships collided—and there was no sign of the destroyer. The fog still hung thick over us all. Four P.M. came and passed and still we searched anxiously to and fro, peering continually into the thick wall of fog, and groping vaguely and blindly after our next ahead, catching a glimpse now and again of her mast or funnels only to lose her completely the next minute, and recommence the chase of her wake, assisted periodically by a fog buoy she veered astern.

From time to time, raucously and rashly, we would make signals on our syren hoping that the cripples would hear us, and periodically we tried wireless signals; but all to no effect, and night came leaving us still anxious for, and out of touch of our destroyer.

The damaged light cruiser was making her own way back to port, and two more destroyers that had lost touch with us during our fog manœuvring were also ordered home, but we should have been much happier for news of our 'lame duck.'

The Germans still appeared to be unaware of our presence, despite our proximity to their coasts, but at any moment some prowling submarine might find us and give the show away, forcing us to scupper the destroyer lest she should fall into the enemy's hands.

During the night the ships of our squadron were spread a couple of miles apart, so as to search over a greater area, but dawn on the next day came and still never a sign of our objective. We had received a signal of her estimated position, but neither she nor we were at all sure of our positions—it is not possible to be so in the North Sea amongst the variable currents, especially so in

this case after so many alterations of course and speed and when it has not been possible to get a fix from the land or observations of the sun or stars for thirty-six hours. But with the new day the fog drifted away and there was soon a visibility of three or four miles.

Mr. Clerk of the Weather, however, was apparently unsatisfied with the capers he had already led us, and now substituted for the fog a rising wind and sea, so that we had visions of the damaged craft foundering before we might pick her up.

At 9 A.M. the flagship ordered one of the light cruisers to make all preparations for taking the destroyer in tow as soon as met with, but not until 2 P.M., thirty hours after the collision, did we at last sight her. She made a weird sight.

Her crumpled bows, unable to stand the strain of the ship's motion any longer, had fallen off into the sea, so that from another ship one could look right into her and see her storerooms and other compartments, whilst the muzzle of her foremost gun, at ordinary times twenty feet or so back from her bows, now protruded over the 'front' of the ship like a tree outgrowing from a cliff.

The men's living spaces right forward had retired to the bottom of the North Sea, and the waves were rolling in, unhindered, against the capstan engine, anchor chain lockers, and foremost mess decks. Yet the ship was still seaworthy, for a transverse bulkhead, which stretches across the ship and runs from the foc'sle deck right down to the keel, was keeping her watertight and preventing other compartments from being flooded—no small advertisement for the efficient work of our Corps of Naval Constructors.

The large area of this bulkhead, however, made it impossible to tow the ship bows first, for the pressure against it under such conditions would be tremendous and too much even for the efficiency of her construction.

The only alternative, therefore, was to tow her stern first. We knew this would be a fairly difficult operation, for she had already been twice in tow of the destroyer that had originally stood by her and each time the strain of the tow had parted the wires.

It was after an hour and a half's work, by about 3 P.M., that we managed to get our wires into her, for it is no easy task in a seaway when one cannot have a boat, but must steam past as close to the other ship as safety will permit, towing astern of you a small hawser with a cask at the end, which the ship to be towed endeavours to pick up.

Then if she gets it you attach to the small hawser a larger hemp hawser, and to that the big wire by which you will tow, one end of which she hauls in and makes fast to herself, whilst you have the other end secured to your stern, and off you go. At least so you should in theory, but in this case we had secured the wire but two or three minutes when a wave lifted us up and simultaneously swung the destroyer's stern off in an opposite direction, throwing a heavy strain on the wire which forthwith parted; so we had to start again.

This time we used the very largest wire we had, which was correspondingly more difficult to handle and harder to get to the destroyer, and not until 6 P.M., just as the light started to fail, were we able to get it to the destroyer. And all this time, you must remember, we made a sitting target for a submarine.

The remainder of the squadron were steaming round and round us acting as far as they could as a submarine screen, and individually, I don't doubt, cursing us heartily for the length of time we were taking. But no enemy craft found us (such opportunities will be missed by fleets which operate in canals), and as twilight settled in we steamed slowly ahead, with rising hopes that this time the tow might hold and that we might succeed in getting her in.

Steaming at revolutions ordinarily sufficient to give us eight knots we made good four to five.

The sea was gradually getting up all the time, and the destroyer was towing crabwise through the water, not dead astern of us so as to give a straight haul, but out on our quarter which put variable strains and jerks on her and on the wire; more especially on the latter at the 'nip'—that part where the wire led into the two ships, and where the bend due to her not being dead astern of us, came in.

The wind too was on our beam, and the seas rolling on swept the destroyer's stern away from us causing our wire, a second later, to bring it back with a sudden jerk. Still for half an hour or so all went well, and the remainder of the squadron closed around us, zigzagging to and fro, as we all shaped course for home.

But fate, as you will guess, had no intention of giving up the game so easily, and at 6.45 P.M. our wire broke at the 'nip.' The 'I-told-you-so's' were in evidence.

We had now no other wire strong enough to tow by, and so, to the disappointment of us all, another cruiser was detailed to take on the job. Disappointing as it was to us, it must have been



far more than that to the destroyer. For thirty-six hours she had lain helpless, with alternate fears of being captured or of breaking up, and that after a sudden collision which would have been sufficient to shake the nerves of many. Four times had she hauled in towing wires, and on each occasion they had parted soon afterwards. Pitched and tossed about in the North Sea swell, tired and wet and with a good deal of their kit gone under, I should think that many of her crew were in that state of mind which is called 'fed up.' And now she had to start the game again.

But, profiting by our experience of how great the strain was under the particular conditions, the new cruiser took special precautions, the which I will not detail lest the Bosches benefit. By very clever seamanship and after over three hours' hard work, mostly in the dark, the destroyer was again in tow, this time more securely; and so we started again on our journey home.

There is not really much more worth relating, for the wind, sea, a couple of snowstorms, our anxious lookout at daylight next morning to see if any enemy were about, and our precautions against submarine attack—these are everyday war events, and make dull reading.

Suffice it to say that our command of the sea was a sufficiently real factor to allow the cripple to be towed home unmolested a few hundred miles, and we came to our base as if no enemy fleet were within a thousand miles—who can accuse the Teuton of no sense of humour when he designated the water we steamed over the 'German Ocean'?

So, comparatively tamely, concluded a trip which had at one time promised unusual excitement, but which anyhow gave us for four days some interest out of the ordinary, besides to some a fair measure of anxiety.

But wouldn't Old Tirpitz be peevish if he knew of the chance he had missed?

### *MASTER GEORGE POLLOCK.*

GEORGE FREDERICK POLLOCK, formerly senior Master of the King's Bench and King's Remembrancer, was born on June 1, 1821, and died on May 20, 1915, just before his ninety-fourth birthday. His faculties, his interests, and his affections remained as fresh as ever up to the last. Apart from his unusual personal charm as a human being, his range of reminiscences was extraordinary, not only by reason of his great age and retentive memory, but also of his native and characteristic versatility. I often urged him to collect them, and indeed a publisher offered to send a shorthand writer for as long as was necessary to dictate a volume. But he said that what he wanted was a 'Boswell,' and even if such a prodigy had been found George Pollock would most probably have been too tired or bored to go on for many days continuously.

In more recent years I made notes of most conversations that I had with him, but I fear that a full harvest could only have been achieved by everyone following my example, and even my own jottings were sadly casual.

I remember being startled by his remarking one day how delighted he was to see G.R. on the mail-carts. It made him feel 'quite a boy again.' He had not seen any of the Georges, but had been astonished, walking down Whitehall as a youth, to see a genial gentleman suddenly look out of his carriage window and put out his tongue. This turned out to be His Majesty King William IV, who wished to indicate to some old naval friends on the pavement that his elevation to the throne had not made him too proud. No wonder that my eldest daughter, on being taken to see him, promptly asked him for his impressions of the execution of Charles I, and was sadly disappointed to find that her great-great-uncle had not attended the ceremony.

George Pollock was no mere lawyer. He was, as his father, the Chief Baron, used proudly to announce to his friends, a first-rate mechanic, and had made a complete study and hobby of clocks and watches.<sup>1</sup> The family watches were always chosen by him and are still going as no other watches go, though they were always a little erratic at first. His accurate observation was never at fault,

<sup>1</sup> He chose the clock which now stands in the smoking-room of the Athenæum.

as when he took up a silver teapot at a wedding reception from among the presents and remarked that it had a hole in it. He told me that when he was leaving Wimbledon he saw his old plumber and said 'I wish you could explain how it was that I always had to get my pipes put right once a year until ten years ago, when you were too busy and I had to attend to them myself, since when they have never gone wrong.' The plumber smiled significantly and replied 'Well, sir, we must live somehow.' Members of the family who had mishaps with bicycles used to find that the mere mention of the name of Pollock evoked kindly welcome and sometimes even an offer to repair the machine free of charge. This was no doubt partly due to his own ungrudging benevolence. In an age when we are all being exhorted to economise it is refreshing to remember that an official in the Law Courts not so very long ago penetrated a large crowd on a London pavement and discovered George Pollock extended over a grating from which he was trying with an umbrella to extract a penny which an urchin in tears professed to have dropped down the abyss. He was a well-known arbitrator in patent cases. He had some knowledge of astronomy, and counted Sir George Airey and Sir Norman Lockyer among his friends, not to mention other scientific men such as Faraday, Owen, and Hooker.

The John Murray of his day consulted him as to publishing 500 copies of the 'Origin of Species.' Murray was extremely sceptical as to the soundness of the work, and thought 500 copies as large a number as it was prudent to print. He remarked that the Darwinian theory was as absurd as though one should contemplate a fruitful union between a poker and a rabbit. George Pollock read the book and remarked that the contents were probably beyond the comprehension of any scientific man then living. But he advised publishing 1000 copies, because Mr. Darwin had so brilliantly surmounted the formidable obstacles which he was honest enough to put in his own path. This is an interesting example of the way in which a man of good general ability, accustomed as a lawyer is to apply broad principles of reason to different kinds of subject-matter, may arrive at sounder conclusions than a specialist.

Talks with him were always a liberal education, because they gave first-hand impressions of an excellent observer in regard to many characters whose biographies are often written by persons who have not even seen the subject of the biography. It was thus thrilling for me, who had always admired the career of Mrs. Norton

and read a recent account of her life, to hear that at a time when the differences between Mr. and Mrs. George Norton were most acute the Chief Baron put his house at the disposal of both so that Mrs. Norton should see her children there. She was accustomed to meet them in a room at one end of which George Pollock (on at least one occasion) sat and read the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' while she played with them at the other end. Usually his sister Mary was there. The heroines of history are not always wholly approved by their contemporaries. An old man, long since dead, told me that the advent of Florence Nightingale was not at first popular with the soldiers in the Crimea, because they felt embarrassed by the idea of female nursing. Similarly, Mrs. Norton was thought by some to be 'playing to the gallery,' and in the opinion of Baron Martin 'talked to too many men' on one occasion when crossing the Atlantic. But George Pollock nevertheless sympathised, as his father did, with her position as regards her children.

His talk, as might be expected, shed light on social usages of the past. One night the Duchess of Somerset was driving near Wimbledon and her carriage fell into a ditch. George Pollock was passing and assisted her and the coachman to get the vehicle out of the ditch and collect various toys and pieces of china back into the carriage. The next morning the Duchess, 'in a refined manner,' sent a military friend to convey her acknowledgments but did not come herself, since, for aught she knew, her benefactor might have had a 'vulgar wife who would return the call.'

He mentioned that baths first came into fashion in the 'fifties, and caused much annoyance to a certain old colonel because they encumbered the officers' luggage. 'These young men,' he complained, 'keep washing themselves till there is not a bit of natural smell about them.' The only unpardonable smell was of course tobacco. Even onions were preferable. Though the late King Edward introduced smoking as far as he could, even when his hosts drove him into the stable-room, George Pollock, despite his respect for the Church, felt it his duty, even in 1883, to remonstrate with a curate who smoked a cigar at a garden party.

His attitude to the divorce question interested me. He mentioned that all the lawyers of the time strongly supported the Act of 1857 in spite of ecclesiastical opposition. But he felt himself 'incompetent to form an opinion' on the question, which curiously illustrated the survival of the old Catholic tradition that marriage

should be an institution entirely subject to ecclesiastical control and jurisdiction.

He naturally told many stories of his father and the law. One of his earliest memories was of mischievously abstracting Scarlett's spectacles from the back of his coat just as he was about to read an important letter to the jury. This was in 1833, when he was a boy of twelve. He mentioned how his brother judges would give way to Maule for fear of his ability and sharp tongue till on one occasion Maule, after delivering judgment and then hearing all the other judgments, suddenly remarked: 'After mature consideration, I differ from my learned brothers. I have come to the conclusion that my judgment was wrong, and the first misgivings that occurred to me about it were due to the fact that my brothers agreed with it.'

As a boy of eighteen he had attended the famous trial of John Frost and others whom his father ably defended on a charge of high treason at Monmouth. He used to relate with great gusto the objection to the proceedings taken on the ground that the list of witnesses had not been handed to the prisoners *with* the copy of the indictment as prescribed by the Act of Queen Anne. It was in that trial that a woman was closely cross-examined about the movements of her husband who had returned home very late and come straight up to bed. 'As he was getting into bed,' she said, 'his words were——' But here she was sharply interrupted by Counsel: 'You must not tell us what he *said*, because that is not evidence; you can only tell us what he *did*.'

His grandfather, David Pollock, had come to London from Berwick and started a saddler and military contractor's business at Charing Cross. David's father was a bookseller at Berwick-on-Tweed, and his grandfather (George Pollock thought) was a cobbler at Perth in the seventeenth century. David died in 1815, and was embarrassed by the fact that Parliament did not allow enough money to cover the liabilities of the Duke of York, not to mention those of the Duke of Kent. He was sometimes in attendance on Royalty itself, when he had to present himself in Court dress. But David died solvent in 1815, and his business was carried on for two years afterwards by his widow and his son William. William died early at the age of thirty-five. Another son, David, who became before his death Lord Chief Justice of Bombay, was sixty-seven at the time of his death. He has been described as a singularly lovable man. Of the other sons

George, my great-uncle's godfather, was ultimately a Field-Marshal, and Frederick the Chief Baron of the Exchequer. It was quite usual for one of the sons to sleep under the counter if the house was more full than usual, and more than one slept there on the occasion of David's funeral. The other son, John, was an adventurous solicitor. He was renowned for his prowess at racquets and generally as an athlete. In the same day he once walked from London to Windsor, won a foot race, and walked back again.

But the hero of George Pollock's stories was usually his father, the Chief Baron, whose judgments bulk so large in the Common Law of England. Unlike his brother John, he thought taking exercise a bore unless it took the form of dancing or of leaping over tables and chairs, as a friend of mine who is still alive saw him doing at an hotel in Norwich after receiving a pair of white gloves, when he was about seventy-five years old. He drove up from Hatton every day in his family coach, though his sedentary habits never prevented his doing justice to his excellent brown sherry, a few bottles of which I once had the privilege of possessing in my own cellar. Though he kept very open house at Hatton, he had a frugal mind in less essential matters. Thus, on consulting Sir Harris Nicolas in regard to tracing the family coat of arms, he was told that it would cost £100 in London, but subsequently discovered that the same operation could be performed in Edinburgh for £20, which gave him great satisfaction. There is a romantic legend that the Pollocks were ruined by the Hanoverians in the Rebellion of 1715, and that the Pollock boar is to be found on a prison wall in Carlisle Castle, presumably carved by a Pollock in captivity. But the Chief Baron cared little for these things, and derived pleasure from recording that his father was a saddler and that he owed much to his mother's co-operation in the family business and belief in himself when a boy. His career at Trinity College, Cambridge, was mainly due to her unsparing efforts.

He had a very human sympathy with prisoners. I have a volume of his notes of evidence, and in one of the murder trials he lays great stress to the jury on the fact that there was no Court of Criminal Appeal. There is a story of a certain burglar having been induced by the prison chaplain to atone for his crime by pleading guilty before the Chief Baron. But after an interval in the Court the burglar returned to the chaplain *acquitted*. 'When

I saw that good kind man sitting in Court,' he explained, 'I knew I should be acquitted and really could not bring myself to plead guilty.'

I have put together as much as I can have recorded of George Pollock's reminiscences. Probably there is better material at the disposal of others, but perhaps this attempt to collect what I heard may stimulate a better qualified relation or friend to write something worthier of him. Such a collection would to some extent mitigate the loss of his winning personality. For a man to be missed as he now is after dying on the verge of his ninety-fourth birthday shows how little old age can extinguish a rare and singularly loving spirit. Up to the last he answered every letter by return of post, and his letters were as affectionate as on the other hand they were businesslike when the occasion demanded. We shall not see his like again. Even his type is gone. The combination of kindness, geniality, and pawky humour that distinguished him is not to be found in our day.

'Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus  
Tam cari capitis?'

E. S. P. HAYNES.



## LADY CONNIE.<sup>1</sup>

BY MRS. HUMPHRY WARD.

### CHAPTER XVI.

CONSTANCE BLEDLOW stepped out of the Bletchley train into the crowded Oxford station. Annette was behind her. As they made their way towards the luggage van, Connie saw a beckoning hand and face. They belonged to Nora Hooper, and in another minute Connie found herself taken possession of by her cousin. Nora was deeply sunburnt. Her colour was more garishly red and brown, her manner more trenchant than ever. At sight of Connie her face flushed with a sudden smile, as though the owner of the face could not help it. Yet they had only been a few minutes together before Connie had discovered that, beneath the sunburn, there was a look of tension and distress, and that the young brown eyes, usually so bright and bold, were dulled with fatigue. But to notice such things in Nora was only to be scorned. Connie held her tongue.

'Can't you leave Annette to bring the luggage, and let us walk up?' said Nora.

Connie assented, and the two girls were soon in the long and generally crowded street leading to the Corn-market. Nora gave rapidly a little necessary information. Term had just begun, and Oxford was 'dreadfully full.' She had got another job of copying work at the Bodleian, for which she was being paid by the University Press, and what with that and the work for her coming exam., she was 'pretty driven.' But she liked it; that was what suited her. Alice and her mother were 'all right.'

'And Uncle Ewen?' said Connie.

Nora paused a moment.

'Well, you won't think he looks any the better for his holiday,' she said at last, with an attempt at a laugh. 'And of course he's doing ten times too much work. Hang work! I loathe work: I want to "do nothing for ever and ever."'

'Why don't you set about it, then?' laughed Connie.

'Because——' Nora began impetuously; and then shut her lips. She diverged to the subject of Mr. Pryce. They had

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1915, by Mrs. Humphry Ward in the United States of America.

not seen or heard anything of him for weeks, she said, till he had paid them an evening call, the night before—the first evening of the new term.

Connie interrupted.

'Oh, but that reminds me,' she said eagerly. 'I've got an awfully nice letter—to-day—from Lord Glaramara. Mr. Pryce is to go up and see him.'

Nora whistled.

'You have! Well, that settles it. He'll now graciously allow himself to propose. And then we shall all pretend to be greatly astonished. Alice will cry, and mother will say, "She never expected to lose her daughter so soon"—etc. What a humbug everybody is!' said the child, bitterly, with more emphasis than grammar.

'But suppose he doesn't get anything!' cried Connie, alarmed at such a sudden jump from the possible to the certain.

'Oh, but he will! He's the kind of person that gets things,' said Nora contemptuously. 'Well, we wanted a bit of good news!'

Connie jumped at the opening.

'Dear Nora!—have things been going wrong? You look awfully tired. Do tell me!'

Nora checked herself at once. 'Oh, not much more than usual,' she said repellently. 'And what about you, Connie? Aren't you very bored to be coming back here, after all your grand times?'

They had emerged into the Corn. Before them was the old Church of St. Mary Magdalen, and the modern pile of Balliol. In the distance stretched the Broad, over which the October evening was darkening fast; the Sheldonian in the far distance, with its statued railing; and the gates of Trinity on the left. The air was full of bells, and the streets of undergraduates; a stream of young men taking fresh possession, as it were, of the grey city, which was their own as soon as they chose to come back to it. The Oxford damp, the Oxford mist was everywhere, pierced by lamps, and window-lights, and the last red of a stormy sunset.

Connie drew in her breath.

'No, I am not sorry. I am very glad to be back—though my aunts have been great dears to me.'

'I'll bet anything Annette isn't glad to be back—after the Langmoors!' said Nora, grimly.

Connie laughed.

'She'll soon settle in. What do you think?' She slipped her arm into her cousin's. 'I'm coming down to breakfast!'

'You're not! I never heard such nonsense! Why should you?' Connie sighed.

'I think I must begin to do something.'

'Do something! For goodness' sake, don't!' Nora's voice was fierce. 'I did think *you* might be trusted!'

'To carry out *your* ideals? So kind of you!'

'If you take to muddling about with books and lectures and wearing ugly clothes, I give you up,' said Nora, firmly.

'Nora, dear, I'm the most shocking ignoramus. Mayn't I learn something?'

'Mr. Sorell may teach you Greek. I don't mind that.'

Connie sighed again, and Nora stole a look at the small pale face under the sailor hat. It seemed to her that her cousin had somehow grown beautiful in these months of absence. On her arrival in May, Connie's good looks had been a freakish and variable thing, which could be often and easily disputed. She could always make a certain brilliant—or bizarre—effect, by virtue of her mere slenderness and delicacy—combined with the startling beauty of her eyes and hair. But the touch of sarcasm, of a half-hostile remoteness, in her look and manner, were often enough to belie the otherwise delightful impression of first youth, to suggest something older and sharper than her twenty years had any right to be. It meant that she had been brought up in a world of elder people, sharing from her teens in its half amused, half sceptical judgments of men and things. Nothing was to be seen of it in her roused moments of pleasure or enthusiasm; at other times it jarred, as though one caught a glimpse of autumn in the spring.

But since she and Nora had last met, something had happened. Some heat of feeling or of sympathy had fused in her the elements of being; so that a more human richness and warmth, a deeper and tenderer charm breathed from her whole aspect. Nora, though so much the younger, had hitherto been the comforter and sustainer of Connie; now for the first time, the tired girl felt an impulse—firmly held back—to throw her arms round Connie's neck, and tell her own troubles.

She did not betray it however. There were so many things she wanted to know. First—how was it that Connie had come back so soon? Nora understood there were invitations—to the Tamworths' and others. Mr. Sorell had reported that the Langmoors wished to carry their niece with them on a round of country-house visits in the autumn, and that Connie had firmly stuck to it that she was due at Oxford for the beginning of term.

'Why didn't you go?' said Nora, half scoffing—'with all those frocks wasting in the drawers!'

Connie retorted that as for parties, Oxford had seemed to her in the summer term the most gay and giddy place she had ever been in, and that she had always understood that in the October and Lent terms people dined out every night.

'But all the same—one can *think* a little here,' she said, slowly.

'You didn't care a bit about that when you first came!' cried Nora. 'You despised us because we weren't soldiers, or diplomats, or politicians. You thought we were a little priggish provincial world where nothing mattered. You were sorry for us because we had *only* books and ideas!'

'I wasn't!' said Connie, indignantly. 'Only I didn't think Oxford was everything—and it isn't! Nora!'—she looked round the Oxford street with a sudden ardour, her eyes running over the groups of undergraduates hurrying back to hall—'do you think these English boys could ever—well, *fight*—and *die*—for what you call ideas—for their country—as Otto Radowitz could die for Poland?'

'Try them!' The reply rang out defiantly. Connie laughed.

'They'll never have the chance. Who'll ever attack England? If we had only something—something splendid, and not too far away!—to look back upon, as the Italians look back on Garibaldi—or to long, and to suffer for, as the Poles long and suffer for Poland!'

'We shall some day!' said Nora, hopefully. 'Mr. Sorell says every nation gets its turn to fight for its life. I suppose Otto Radowitz has been talking Poland to you?'

'He talks it—and he *lives* it,' said Connie, with emphasis. 'It's marvellous!—it shames one.'

Nora shrugged her shoulders.

'But what can he *do*—with his poor hand! You know Mr. Sorell has taken a cottage for him at Boar's Hill—above Hinksey?'

Yes, Connie knew. She seemed suddenly on her guard.

'But he can't live alone?' said Nora. 'Who on earth's going to look after him?'

Connie hesitated. Down a side street she perceived the stately front of Marmion, and at the same moment a tall man emerging from the dusk crossed the street and entered the Marmion gate. Her heart leapt. No! Absurd! He and Otto had not arrived yet. But already the Oxford dark, and the beautiful Oxford distances were peopled for her with visions and prophecies of

hope. The old and famous city that had seen so much youth bloom and pass, spoke magic things to her with its wise, friendly voice.

Aloud, she said—

‘You haven’t heard? Mr. Falloden’s going to live with him.’

Nora stopped in stupefaction.

‘What?’

Connie repeated the information—adding—

‘I daresay Mr. Sorell didn’t speak of it to you, because—he hates it.’

‘I suppose it’s just a theatrical *coup*,’ said Nora, passionately, as they walked on—‘to impress the public.’

‘It isn’t!—it isn’t anything of the kind. And Otto had only to say No.’

‘It’s ridiculous!—preposterous! They’ll clash all day long.’

Connie replied with difficulty, as though she had so pondered and discussed this matter with herself that every opinion about it seemed equally reasonable.

‘I don’t think so. Otto wishes it.’

‘But why—but *why*?’ insisted Nora. ‘Oh, Connie!—as if Douglas Falloden could look after anybody but himself!’

Then she repented a little. Connie smiled, rather coldly.

‘He looked after his father,’ she said, quietly. ‘I told you all that in my letters. And you forget how it was—that he and Otto came across each other again.’

Nora warmly declared that she had not forgotten it, but that it did not seem to her to have anything to do with the extraordinary proposal that the man more responsible than anyone else for the maiming—possibly for the death—of Otto Radowitz, if all one heard about him were true, should be now installed as his companion and guardian during these critical months.

She talked with obvious and rather angry common sense, as one who had not passed her eighteenth birthday for nothing.

But Connie fell silent. She would not discuss it, and Nora was obliged to let the subject drop.

Mrs. Hooper, whose pinched face had grown visibly older, received her husband’s niece with an evident wish to be kind. Alice, too, was almost affectionate, and Uncle Ewen came hurrying out of his study to greet her. But Connie had not been an hour in the house before she had perceived that everybody in it was pre-occupied and unhappy; unless, indeed, it were Alice, who had

evidently private thoughts of her own, which, to a certain extent, released her from the family worries.

What was the matter? She was determined to know.

It happened that she and Alice went up to bed together. Nora had been closeted with her father in the little school-room on the ground-floor, since nine o'clock, and when Connie proposed to look in and wish them good-night, Alice said uncomfortably—

'Better not. They're—they're very busy.'

Connie ruminated. At the top of the stairs, she turned—

'Look here—do come in to me, and have a talk!'

Alice agreed, after a moment's hesitation. There had never been any beginnings of intimacy between her and Connie, and she took Connie's advance awkwardly.

The two girls were however soon seated in Connie's room where a blazing fire defied the sudden cold of a raw and bleak October. The light danced on Alice's beady black eyes and arched brows, on her thin but very red lips, on the bright patch of colour in each cheek. She was more than ever like a Watteau sketch in black chalk, heightened with red, and the dress she wore, cut after the pattern of an eighteenth century sacque, according to an Oxford fashion of that day, fell in admirably with the natural effect. Connie had very soon taken off her tea-gown, loosened and shaken out her hair, and put on a white garment in which she felt at ease. Alice noticed, as Nora had done, that Connie was fast becoming a beauty; but whether the indisputable fact was to be welcomed or resented had still to be decided.

Connie had no sooner settled herself on the small sofa she had managed to fit into her room than she sprang up again:—

'Stupid!—Where *are* those letters!' She rummaged in various drawers and bags, hit upon what she wanted, after an impetuous hunt, and returned to the fire.

'Do you know I think Mr. Pryce has a good chance of that post? I got this to-day.'

She held out a letter, smiling. Alice flushed and took it. It was from Lord Glaramara, and it concerned that same post in the Conservative Central Office on which Herbert Pryce had had his eyes for some time. The man holding it had been 'going' for months, but was now, at last, gone. The post was vacant, and Connie, who had a pretty natural turn for wire-pulling, fostered by her Italian bringing up, had been trying her hand, both with the Chancellor and her Uncle Langmoor.

'You little intriguer!' wrote Lord Glaramara—'I will do what

I can. Your man sounds very suitable. If he isn't, I can tell you plainly, he won't get the post. Neither political party can afford to employ fools just now. But if he is what you say—well, we shall see! Send him up to see me, at the House of Lords, almost any evening next week. He'll have to take his chance, of course, of finding me free. If I cotton to him, I'll send him on to somebody else. And—*don't talk about it!* Your letter was just like your mother. She had an art of doing these things!

Alice read and re-read the note. When she looked up from it, it was with a rather fluttered face.

'Awfully good of you, Connie! May I show it—to Mr. Pryce?'

'Yes—but get it back. Tell him to write to Lord Glaramara—to-morrow. Well, now then'—Connie discovered and lit a cigarette, the sight of which stirred in Alice a kind of fascinated disapproval,—'now then, tell me what's the matter!—why Uncle Ewen looks as if he hadn't had a day's rest since last term, and Nora's so glum—and why he and she go sitting up at night together when they ought to be in their beds?'

Connie's little woman-of-the-world air—very evident in this speech—which had always provoked Alice in their earlier acquaintance, passed now unnoticed. Miss Hooper sat perplexed and hesitating, staring into the fire. But with that note in her pocket, Alice felt herself at once in a new and detached position towards her family.

'It's money, of course,' she said at last, her white brow puckering. 'It's not only bills—they're dreadfully worrying!—we seem never to get free from them, but it's something else—something quite new—which has only happened lately. There was an old loan from the bank, that has been going on for years. Father had almost forgotten it, and now they're pressing him. It's dreadful! They know we're so hard up.'

Connie in her turn looked perplexed. It was always difficult for her to realise financial trouble on a small scale. Ruin on the Falloden scale was intelligible to one who had heard much talk of the bankruptcies of some of the great Roman families, owing to the building speculations of Rome, after 1870. But the carking care that may come from lack of a few hundred pounds, this the Risboroughs' daughter had to learn; and she put her mind to it, eagerly.

She propped her small chin on her hands, while Alice told her tale. Apparently the improvement in the family finance, caused by Connie's three hundred, had been the merest temporary thing.



The Reader's creditors had been held off for a few months ; but the rain of tradesmen's letters had been lately incessant. And the situation had been greatly worsened by a blow which had fallen just before the opening of term.

In a former crisis, five years before this date, a compassionate cousin, one of the few well-to-do relations that Mrs. Hooper possessed, had come to the rescue, and had given his name to the Hoopers' bankers as guarantee for a loan of £500. The loan was to have been repaid by yearly instalments. But the instalments had not been paid, and the cousin had most unexpectedly died of apoplexy during September, after three days' illness. His heir would have nothing to say to the guarantee, and the bank was pressing for repayment, in terms made all the harsher by the existence of an over-draft, which the local manager knew in his financial conscience ought not to have been allowed. His letters were now so many sword-thrusts ; and post-time was a time of terror.

'Father doesn't know what to do,' said Alice despondently. 'He and Nora spend all their time trying to think of some way out. Father got his salary the other day, and never put it into the bank at all. We must have something to live on. None'—she hesitated—'none of the tradesmen will give us any credit.' She flushed deeply over the confession.

'Goodness !' said Connie, opening her eyes still wider.

'But if Nora knows that I've been telling you'—cried Alice—'she'll never forgive me. She made me promise I wouldn't tell you. But how can you help knowing ? If Father's made a bankrupt, it wouldn't be very nice for you ! How could you go on living with us ? Nora thinks she's going to earn money—that Father can sell two wretched little books—and we can go and live in a tiny house on the Cowley Road—and—and—all sorts of absurd things !'

'But why is it Nora that has to settle all these things ?' asked Connie in bewilderment. 'Why doesn't your mother—'

'Oh, because mother doesn't know anything about the bills,' interrupted Alice. 'She never can do a sum—or add up anything—and I'm no use at it either. Nora took it all over last year, and she won't let even me help her. She makes out the most wonderful statements—she made out a fresh one to-day—that's why she had a headache when she came to meet you. But what's the good of statements ? They won't pay the bank.'

'But why—why——' repeated Connie, and then stopped, lest she should hurt Alice's feelings.

'Why did we get into debt ? I'm sure I don't know !' Alice

shook her head helplessly. 'We never seemed to have anything extravagant.'

These things were beyond Connie's understanding. She gave it up. But her mind impetuously ran forward.

'How much is wanted—altogether?'

Alice, reluctantly, named a sum not much short of a thousand pounds.

'Isn't it awful?'

She sighed deeply. Yet already she seemed to be talking of other people's affairs!

'We can't ever do it. It's hopeless. Papa's taken two little school-books to do. They'll kill him with work, and will hardly bring in anything. And he's full up with horrid exams and lectures. He'll break down, and it all makes him so miserable, because he can't really do the work the University pays him to do. And he's never been abroad—even to Rome. And as to Greece! It's dreadful!' she repeated mechanically.

Connie sprang up and began to pace the little room. The fire-light played on her mop of brown hair, bringing out its golden shades, and on the charming pensiveness of her face. Alice watched her, thinking—'*She* could do it all, if she chose!' But she didn't dare to say anything, for fear of Nora.

Presently Connie gave a great stretch.

'It's damnable!' she said, with energy.

Alice's instinct recoiled from the strong word. It wasn't the least necessary, she thought, to talk in that way.

Connie made a good many more enquiries—elicited a good many more facts. Then suddenly she brought her pacing to a stop.

'Look here—we must go to bed!—or Nora will be after us.'

Alice went obediently. As soon as the door had shut upon her, Connie went to a drawer in her writing-table, and took out her bank-book. It had been returned that morning and she had not troubled to look at it. There was always enough for what she wanted.

Heavens!—what a balance. She had quite forgotten a wind-fall which had befallen her lately—some complicated transaction relating to a great industrial company in which she had shares—which had lately been giving birth to other subsidiary companies, and somehow the original shareholders, of whom Lord Risborough had been one, or their heirs and representatives, had profited greatly by the business. It had all been managed for her by her father's lawyer, and of course by Uncle Ewen. The money had been paid

temporarily into her own account, till the lawyer had made some further enquiries about a fresh investment they recommended.

But it was her own money. She was entitled—under the terms of her father's letter to Uncle Ewen—to do what she liked with it. And even without it, there was enough in the bank. Enough for this—and for another purpose also, which lay even closer to her heart.

'I don't want any more new gowns for six months,' she decided peremptorily. 'It's disgusting to be so well off. Well, now,—I wonder—I wonder where Nora keeps those statements that Alice talks about?'

In the school-room of course. But not under lock and key. Nobody ever locked drawers in that house. It was part of the general happy-go-luckishness of the family.

Connie made up the fire, and sat over it, thinking hard. A new cheque-book, too, had arrived with the bank-book. That was useful.

She waited till she heard the study door open, and Nora come upstairs, followed soon by the slow and weary step of Uncle Ewen. Connie had already lowered her gas before Nora reached the top landing.

The house was very soon silent. Connie turned her light on again, and waited. By the time Big Ben had struck one o'clock, she thought it would be safe to venture.

She opened her door with trembling, careful fingers, slipped off her shoes, took a candle and stole downstairs. The school-room door creaked odiously. But soon she was inside and looking about her.

There was Nora's table, piled high with the books and note-books of her English literature work. Everything else had been put away. But the top drawer of the table was unlocked. There was a key in it, but it would not turn, being out of repair, like so much else in the house.

Connie, full of qualms, slowly opened the drawer. It was horrid—horrid—to do such things!—but what other way was there? Nora must be presented with the *fait accompli*, otherwise she would upset everything—poor old darling!

Some loose sheets lay on the top of the papers in the drawer. The first was covered with figures and calculations that told nothing. Connie lifted it, and there, beneath, lay Nora's latest 'statement,' at which she and her father had no doubt been working that very night. It was headed 'List of liabilities,' and in it every debt, headed by the Bank claim which had broken the family back, was

accurately and clearly stated in Nora's best hand. The total at the foot evoked a low whistle from Connie. How had it come about? In spite of her luxurious bringing up, there was a shrewd element—an element of competence—in the girl's developing character, which was inclined to suggest that there need be no more difficulty in living on seven hundred a year than seven thousand, if you knew you had to do it. Then she rebuked herself fiercely for a prig—'You just try it!—you Pharisee, you!' And she thought of her own dressmakers' and milliners' bills, and became in the end quite pitiful over Aunt Ellen's moderation. After all it might have been two thousand instead of one! Of course it was all Aunt Ellen's muddling, and Uncle Ewen's absent-mindedness.

She shaded her candle, and in a guilty hurry copied down the total on a slip of paper lying on the table, and took the address of Uncle Ewen's bank, from the outside of the pass-book lying beside the bills. Having done that, she closed the drawer again, and crept upstairs like the criminal she felt herself. Her small feet in their thin stockings seemed to her excited ears to be making the most hideous and unnatural noise on every step. If Nora heard!

At last she was safe in her own room again. The door was locked and the more agreeable part of the crime began. She drew out the new cheque-book lying in her own drawer, and very slowly and deliberately wrote a cheque. Then she put it up, with a few covering words—anxiously considered—and addressed the envelope to the Oxford branch of a well-known banking firm, her father's bankers, to which her own account had been transferred on her arrival at Oxford. Ewen Hooper had scrupulously refrained from recommending his own bank, lest he should profit indirectly by his niece's wealth.

'Annette shall take it,' she thought—'first thing. Oh, what a row there'll be!'

And then, uneasily pleased with her performance, she went to bed.

And she had soon forgotten all about her raid upon Uncle Ewen's affairs. Her thoughts floated to a little cottage on the hills, and its two coming inhabitants. And in her dream she seemed to hear herself say—'I oughtn't to be meddling with other people's lives like this. I don't know enough. I'm too young! I want somebody to show me—I *do*!'

The following day passed heavily in the Hooper household. Nora and her father were closeted together all the morning; and

there was a sense of brooding calamity in the air. Alice and Connie avoided each other, and Connie asked no questions. After luncheon Sorell called. He found Connie in the drawing-room alone, and gave her the news she was pining for. As Nora had reported, a cottage on Boar's Hill had been found. It belonged to the head of an Oxford College, who had spent the preceding winter there for his health, but had now been ordered abroad. It was very small, pleasantly furnished, and had a glorious view, over Oxford in the hollow, the wooded lines of Garsington and Nuneham, and the distant ridges of the Chilterns. Radowitz was expected the following day, and his old college servant, with a woman to cook and do housework, had been found to look after him. He was working hard, at his symphony, and was on the whole much the same in health,—very frail and often extremely irritable; with alternations of cheerfulness and depression.

'And Mr. Falloden?' Connie ventured.

'He's coming soon—I didn't ask,' said Sorell shortly. 'That arrangement won't last long.'

Connie hesitated.

'But don't *wish* it to fail!' she said, piteously.

'I think the sooner it is over the better,' said Sorell, with rather stern decision. 'Falloden ought never to have made the proposal, and it was mere caprice in Otto to accept it. But you know what I think. I shall watch the whole thing very anxiously; and try to have someone ready to put into Falloden's place—when it breaks down. Mrs. Mulholland and I have it in hand. She'll take Otto up to the cottage to-morrow and means to mother Radowitz as much as he'll let her. Now then'—he changed the subject with a smile—'are you going to enjoy your winter term?'

His dark eyes, as she met them, were full of an anxious affection.

'I have forgotten all my Greek!'

'Oh no—not in a month. Prepare me a hundred lines of the "Odyssey," Book VI! Next week I shall have some time. This first week is always a drive. Miss Nora says she'll go on again.'

'Does she? She seems so—so busy.'

'Ah, yes—she's got some work for the University Press. Plucky little thing! But she mustn't overdo it.'

Connie dropped the subject. These conferences in the study, which had gone on all day, had nothing to do with Nora's work for the Press—that she was certain of. But she only said—holding out her hands, with the free gesture that was natural to her—

'I wish someone would give me the chance of "overdoing it"! Do set me to work—hard work! The sun never shines here.'

Her eyes wandered petulantly to the rainy sky outside, and the high-walled college opposite.

'Southerner! Wait till you see it shining on the Virginian creeper in our garden quad. Oxford is a dream in October!—just for a week or two, till the leaves fall. November is dreary, I admit. All the same—try and be happy!'

He looked at her gravely and tenderly. She coloured a little as she withdrew her hands.

'Happy? That doesn't matter—does it? But perhaps for a change—one might try——'

'Try what?'

'Well!—she laughed, but he thought there were tears in her eyes—'to do something—for somebody—occasionally.'

'Ask Mrs. Mulholland! She has a genius for that kind of thing. Teach some of her orphans!'

'I couldn't! They'd find me out.'

Sorell, rather puzzled, suggested that she might become a Home Student like Nora, and go in for a Literature or Modern History Certificate. Connie, who was now sitting moodily over a grate with no fire in it, with her chin in her hands, only shook her head.

'I don't know anything—I never learnt anything. And everybody here's so *appallingly* clever!'

Then she declared that she would go and have tea with the Master of Beaumont, and ask his advice. 'He told me to learn something,'—the tone was one of depression, passing into rebellion—'but I don't want to learn anything!—I want to *do something*!'

Sorell laughed at her.

'Learning is doing!'

'That's what Oxford people think,' she said defiantly. 'I don't agree with them.'

'What do *you* mean by "doing"?'

Connie poked an imaginary fire.

'Making myself happy'—she said slowly, 'and—and a few other people!'

Sorell laughed again. Then rising to take his leave, he stooped over her.

'Make *me* happy—by undoing that stroke of yours—at Boar's Hill!'

Connie raised herself, and looked at him steadily.

Then gravely and decisively she shook her head.

'Not at all! I shall keep an eye on it!—so must you!'

Then, suddenly, she smiled—the softest, most radiant smile, as though some hope within, far within, looked out. It was gone in a moment, and Sorell went his way; but as one who had been the spectator of an event.

After his departure Connie sat on in the cold room, thinking about Sorell. She was devoted to him—he was the noblest, dearest person. She wished dreadfully to please him. But she wasn't going to let him—

Well, what?

—to let him interfere with that passionate purpose which seemed to be beating in her, and through her, like a living thing, though as yet she had but vaguely defined it, even to herself.

After tea, which Mrs. Hooper dispensed with red eyes, and at which neither Nora nor Dr. Hooper appeared, Constance found a novel, and established herself in the deserted school-room. She couldn't go out. She was on the watch for a letter that might arrive. The two banks were only a stone's throw apart. The local post should deliver that letter about six.

Once Nora looked in to find a document, and was astonished to see Connie there. But she was evidently too harassed and miserable to talk. Connie listened uneasily to the opening and shutting of a drawer, with which she was already acquainted. Then Nora disappeared again. What were they trying to do, poor dears!—Nora, and Uncle Ewen? What could they do?

The autumn evening darkened slowly. At last!—a ring and a double knock. The study door opened, and Connie heard Nora's step, and the click of the letter-box. The study door closed again.

Connie put down her novel and listened. Her hands trembled. She was full indeed of qualms and compunctions. Would they be angry with her? She had meant it well.

Footsteps approaching—not Nora's.

Uncle Ewen stood in the doorway—looking very pale and strained.

'Connie, would you mind coming into my study? Something rather strange has happened.'

Connie got up and slowly followed him across the hall. As she entered the study, she saw Nora, with blazing eyes and cheeks, standing by her father's writing-table, aglow with anger or



excitement—or both. She looked at Connie as at an enemy, and Connie flushed a bright pink.

Uncle Ewen shut the door, and addressed his niece. ‘My dear Connie, I want you, if you can—to throw some light on a letter I have just received. Both Nora and I suspect your hand in it. If so, you have done something I—I can’t permit.’

He held out a letter, which Connie took like a culprit. It was a communication from his Oxford bankers to Professor Hooper, to the effect that, a sum of £1100 having been paid in to his credit by a person who desired to remain unknown, his debt to them was covered, and his account showed a balance of about six hundred pounds.

‘My dear!’—his voice and hand shook—‘is that your doing?’

‘Of course it is!’ interrupted Nora passionately. ‘Look at her, father! How *dared* you, Connie, do such a thing without a word to father! It’s a *shame*—a *disgrace*! We *could* have found a way out—we could!’

And the poor child, worn out with anxiety and lack of sleep, and in her sensitive pride and misery ready to turn on Connie and rend her, for having dared thus to play Lady Bountiful without warning or permission, sank into a chair, covered her face with her hands, and burst out sobbing.

Connie handed back the letter, and hung her head. ‘Won’t you—won’t you let the person—who—sent the money remain unknown, Uncle Ewen?—as they wished to be?’

Uncle Ewen sat down before his writing-table and he also buried his face in his hands. Connie stood between them—as it were a prisoner at the bar—looking now very white and childish.

‘Dear Uncle Ewen—’

‘How did you guess?’ said Nora vehemently, uncovering her face—‘I never said a word to you!’

Connie gave a tremulous laugh.

‘Do you think I couldn’t see—that you were all dreadfully unhappy about something? I—I made Alice tell me—’

‘Alice is a sieve!’ cried Nora. ‘I knew, Father, we could never trust her.’

‘And then’—Connie went on—‘I—I did an awful thing. I’d better tell you. I came and looked at Nora’s papers—in the schoolroom drawer. I saw that.’ She pointed penitentially to a sheet of figures lying on the study table.

Both Nora and her uncle looked up in amazement, staring at her.

‘It was at night,’ she said hurriedly—‘last night. Oh, I put

it all back ! '—she turned, pleading, to Nora—' just as I found it. You shouldn't be angry with me—you shouldn't indeed ! '

Then her own voice began to shake. She came and laid her hand on her uncle's shoulder.

' Dear uncle Ewen—you know, I had that extra money ! What did I want with it ? Just think—if it had been Mamma ! Wouldn't you have let her help ? You know you would ! You couldn't have been so unkind—Well then, I knew it would be no good, if I came and asked you—you wouldn't have let me. So I—well, I just did it ! '

Ewen Hooper rose from his table in great distress of mind.

' But, my dear Connie—you are my ward—and I am your guardian ! How can I let you give me money ? '

' It's my own money,' said Connie firmly. ' You know it is. Father wrote to you to say I might spend it *now*, as I liked—all there was, except the capital of my two thousand a year, which I mayn't spend—till I'm twenty-five. This has nothing to do with that. I'm quite free—and so are you. *Do* you think '—she drew herself up indignantly—' that you're going to make me happy—by turning me out, and all—all of you going to rack and ruin—when I've got that silly money lying in the bank ? I won't have it ! I don't want to go and live in the Cowley Road ! I won't go and live in the Cowley Road ! You promised Father and Mother to look after me, Uncle Ewen, and it isn't looking after me—'

' You can't reproach me on that score as much as I do myself ! ' said Ewen Hooper, with emotion. ' There's something in that I admit—there's something in that. '

He began to pace the room. Presently, pausing beside Connie, he plunged into an agitated and incoherent account of the situation—of the efforts he had made to get even some temporary help—and of the failure of all of them. It was the confession of a weak and defeated man ; and as made by a man of his age to a girl of Connie's, it was extremely painful. Nora hid her eyes again, and Connie got paler and paler.

At last she went up to him, holding out again appealing hands.

' *Please* don't tell me any more ! It's all right. I just love you, Uncle Ewen—and—and Nora ! I want to help ! It makes me happy. Oh, why won't you let me ? '

He wavered.

' You dear child ! ' There was a silence. Then he resumed—as though feeling his way—

'It occurs to me—that I might consult Sorell. If he thought it right—if we could protect you from loss——!'

Connie sprang at him and kissed him in delight.

'Of course!—that'll do splendidly! Mr. Sorell will see, at once, it's the right thing for me, and my happiness. I can't be turned out—I really can't! So it's settled. Yes—it's *settled*!—or it will be directly—and nobody need bother any more—need they? But—there's one condition.'

Ewen Hooper looked at her in silence.

—'That you—you and Nora—go to Rome this Christmas, this very Christmas, Uncle Ewen! I think I put in enough—and I can give you such a lot of letters!'

She laughed joyously, though she was very near crying.

'I have never been able to go to Rome—or Athens—never!' he said, in a low voice, as he sat down again at his table. All the thwarted hopes, all the sordid cares of years were in the quiet words.

'Well, now you're going!' said Connie, shyly. 'Oh, that would be ripping! You'll promise me that—you *must*, please!'

Silence again. She approached Nora, timidly.

'Nora!'

Nora rose. Her face was stained with tears.

'It's all wrong,' she said heavily—'it's all wrong. But—I give in. What I said was a lie. There is nothing else in the world that we could possibly do.'

And she rushed out of the room without another word. Connie looked wistfully after her. Nora's pain in receiving had stirred in her the shamefaced distress in giving that lives in generous souls. 'Why should I have more than they?'

She stole out after Nora. Ewen Hooper was left staring at the letter from his bankers, and trying to collect his thoughts. Connie's voice was still in his ears. It had all the sweetness of his dead sister's.

Connie was reading in her own room before dinner. She had shut herself up there, feeling rather battered by the emotions of the afternoon, when she heard a knock that she knew was Nora's.

'Come in!'

Nora appeared. She had had her storm of weeping in private and got over it. She was now quite composed, but the depression,

the humiliation even, expressed in her whole bearing dismayed Connie afresh.

Nora took a seat on the other side of the fire. Connie eyed her uneasily.

'Are you ever going to forgive me, Nora?' she said, at last. Nora shrugged her shoulders.

'You couldn't help it. I see that.'

'Thank you,' said Connie meekly.

'But what I *can't* forgive is that you never said a word——'

—'To you? That you might undo it all? Nora, you really are an absurd person!' Connie sprang up, and came to kneel by the fire, so that she might attack her cousin at close quarters. 'We're told it's "more blessed to give than to receive." Not when you're on the premises, Nora! I really don't think you need make me feel such an outcast! I say—how many nights have you been awake lately?'

Nora's lip quivered a little.

'That doesn't matter,' she said shortly.

'Yes, but it does matter! You promised to be my friend—and—you have been treating me *abominably*!' said Connie, with flashing eyes.

Nora feebly defended herself, but was soon reduced to accept a pair of arms thrown round her, and a soft shoulder on which to rest an aching head.

'I'm no good,' she said, despairingly. 'I give up—everything.'

'That's all right!' Connie's tone was extremely cheerful. 'Which means, I hope, that you'll give up that absurd copying in the Bodleian. You get about twopence-halfpenny for it, and it'll cost you your first-class. How are you going to get a First I should like to know, with your head full of bills, and *no* sleep at nights!'

Nora flushed fiercely.

'I want to earn my living—I mean to earn my living! And how do you know—after all'—she held Connie at arm's length—'that Mr. Sorell's going to approve of what you've done? And Father won't accept, unless he does.'

Connie laughed.

'Mr. Sorell will do—exactly what pleases me. Mr. Sorell'—she began to search for a cigarette—'Mr. Sorell is an angel.'

A silence. Connie looked up, rather surprised.

'Don't you agree?'

'Yes,' said Nora in an odd voice.

Connie observed her. A flickering light began to play in the brown eyes.

‘H’m. Have you been doing some Greek already?—stealing a march on me?’

‘I had a lesson last week.’

‘Had you? The first I’ve heard of it!’ Connie fluttered up and down the room in her white dressing-gown, occasionally breaking into a dance-step, as though to work off a superfluity of spirits.

Finally she stopped in front of Nora, looking her up and down.

‘I dare you to hide anything again from me, Nora!’

Nora sat up.

‘There is nothing to hide,’ she said stiffly.

Connie laughed aloud; and Nora suddenly sprang from her chair, and ran out of the room.

Connie was left panting a little. Life in Medburn Hall seemed certainly to be running faster than of old!

‘I never gave him leave to fall in love with Nora!’ she thought, with an unmistakable pang of common ordinary jealousy. She had been so long accustomed to take her property in Sorell for granted!—and the summer months had brought her into such intimate contact with him. ‘And he never made love to me for one moment!—nor I to him. I don’t believe he’s made love to Nora—I’m sure he hasn’t—*yet*. But why didn’t he tell me of that Greek lesson?’

She stood before the glass, pulling down her hair, so that it fell all about her.

‘I seem to be rather cut out for fairy-godmothering!’ she said pensively to the image in the glass. ‘But there’s a good deal to do for the post!—one must admit there’s a good deal to do: Nora’s got to be fixed up—and all the money business. And then—then!’

She clasped her hands behind her head. Her eyelids fell, and through her slight figure there ran a throb of yearning—of tender, yet despairing passion.

‘If I could only mend things *there*, I might be some use. I don’t want him to marry me—but just—just—’

Then her hands fell. She shook her head angrily.

‘You humbug!—you *humbug*! Who are you posing for now?’

(To be continued.)

